EX. LIBRIS
REV. C. W. SULLIVAN
BRAMPTON

76

Popular Religious Works.

I.

ECCLESIASTICAL CYCLOPÆDIA;

OR,

DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES AND SECTS;

COMPRISING

ARCHITECTURE, CONTROVERSIES, CREEDS, CUSTOMS, DENOMINATIONS, DOCTRINES, GOVERNMENT, HERESIES, HISTORY, LITURGIES, RITES, MONASTIC ORDERS, AND MODERN JUDAISM.

By John Eadie, D.D., LL.D.

Post 8vo, 8s. 6d. cloth.

II.

A NEW AND COMPLETE

CONCORDANCE TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES;

ON THE BASIS OF CRUDEN.

By John Eadie, D.D., LL.D.

Twenty-second Edition. Post 8vo, 5s. cloth.

III.

ANALYTICAL CONCORDANCE TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES;

OR,

THE BIBLE PRESENTED UNDER DISTINCT AND CLASSIFIED HEADS OR TOPICS.

By John Eadie, D.D., LL.D.

Third Edition. Post 8vo, 8s. 6d. cloth.

IV.

BIBLICAL CYCLOPÆDIA;

OR,

DICTIONARY OF EASTERN ANTIQUITIES, GEOGRAPHY, NATURAL HISTORY, SACRED ANNALS AND BIOGRAPHY, THEOLOGY, AND BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

By John Eadie, D.D., LL.D.

Maps and Pictorial Illustrations. Eighth Edition, revised. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

V.

CYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGIOUS ANECDOTE:

A VAST COLLECTION OF FACTS, NARRATIVES, AND EXAMPLES.

WITH COPIOUS INDEX AND INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

By Rev. Dr. Cheever.

Eighth Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

VI.

CYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS:

AN AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF THE VARIOUS RELIGIONS PREVAILING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Written by Members of the respective Bodies.

Third Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

FIRST DIVISION.

THE FIRST CENTURY.

Important Ecclesiastical Works.

NEW CHURCH DICTIONARY.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL CYCLOPÆDIA; OR, DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES AND SECTS,

COMPRISING

Architecture, Controversies, Creeds, Customs, Denominations, Doctrines, Government, Heresies, History, Liturgies, Rites, Monastic Orders, and Modern Judaism.

Edited by JOHN EADIE, D.D., LL.D.

Post 8vo, 8s. 6d. cloth.

THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD.

THE CYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS;

CONTAINING

Authentic Accounts of the various Creeds and Systems prevailing throughout the World. Written by Members of the Respective Bodies.

With a HARMONY of the CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS of FAITH. By a Member of the Evangelical Alliance.

Third Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

THE CYCLOPÆDIA OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS:

THEIR RISE, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT POSITION.

With Interesting Details of MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE all over the World.

By REV. JOHN LOGAN AIKMAN.

Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE PRESENT DAY.

By the BISHOPS of HEREFORD and NORWICH, PROFESSOR JEREMIE, REV. ALFRED LYALL, M.A., REV. J. E. RIDDLE, M.A., REV. HENRY J. ROSE, B.D., and Others.

Three vols., crown 8vo, 21s. cloth.

HISTORY

OF

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

IN

THE FIRST CENTURY.

BY

SAMUEL HINDS, D.D.,
LATE BISHOP OF NORWICH;

AND

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, D.D.,
LATE ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

LONDON:
GRIFFIN, BOHN, AND COMPANY,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The History of the Christian Church, contained in the Historical Division of the Encyclopædia Metropolitana, will form Three Volumes of this Edition. The present Volume contains the History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity, with the Correspondence between Pliny and the Emperor Trajan respecting the Early Christians; and a Dissertation on the Credibility of Miracles, in which the Miracles of Scripture are contrasted with the Spurious Miracles recorded to have been performed by Apollonius of Tyana.

The History of Early Christianity is printed from the text of the Author's last separate Edition, with the addition of side notes. The Dissertation on Miracles is reprinted from the original Edition. The Letters of Pliny have been taken from the Translation of Pliny's Epistles by William Melmoth.

THE RISE AND EARLY PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

By SAMUEL HINDS, D.D.,

BISHOP OF NORWICH.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Introduction, ... 1
Religion of the Gentiles, ... 2
Religion of the Jews, ... 23
Religion of the Samaritans, ... 34

PART I.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST.

I. His Example, ... 38
II. His Teaching, ... 40
III. His Miracles, ... 41
IV. His Institutions, ... 42
V. His Prophecies, ... 43
1. Concerning Himself, ... 44
2. Concerning His Church, ... 44
3. Concerning certain Individuals, ... 46
4. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, ... 49
VI. The Temptation, ... 52
The Transfiguration, ... 54
Conclusion, ... 55

PART II.

APOSTOLIC AGE.

CHAP. I.—Distinction between Christianity as taught by our Saviour, and by his Apostles, ... 56

What Preparation Christ had made before his Departure for the Establishment of Christianity, ... 62

CHAP. II.—Preaching to the Jews, ... 68

Appointment of Matthias to be an Apostle, ... 72
Descent of the Holy Ghost, ... 74

PAGE

CHAP. II.—*Continued.*

Second extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Ghost, . . . 81
The Case of Ananias and Sapphira, ... 83
Appointment of the Seven Deacons, ... 86
Effects of Stephen's Martyrdom, ... 90
Conversion of Saul, ... 92

CHAP. III.—PREACHING TO JEWS AND DEVOUT GENTILES, . . 95

Conversion of Cornelius, ... 95
Foundation of the Church of Antioch, ... 100
St. Paul's Revelation and Appointment, ... 102

CHAP. IV.—PREACHING TO JEWS, DEVOUT GENTILES, AND IDOLATERS, 105

ST. PAUL'S FIRST APOSTOLICAL JOURNEY, ... 105
Decree of the Council of Jerusalem, ... 108

CHAP. V.—ST. PAUL'S SECOND APOSTOLICAL JOURNEY, ... 118

St. Paul at Troas, ... 119
St. Paul and the Pythoness, ... 125
St. Paul at Athens, ... 127
St. Paul at Corinth and at Cenchræa, ... 130

CHAP. VI.—ST. PAUL'S THIRD APOSTOLICAL JOURNEY, ... 131

St. Paul and the disciples of John the Baptist, ... 131
Collections for the poor of Judæa, ... 134
St. Paul and the Corinthians, ... 135
St. Paul and the Ephesian Presbyters, ... 143
St. Paul at Jerusalem, ... 149

CHAP. VII.—ST. PAUL'S FOURTH APOSTOLICAL JOURNEY, . . 152

St. Paul a Prisoner at Rome, ... 153
St. Paul and Onesimus, ... 155
St. Paul at Liberty, ... 155

CHAP. VIII.—ST. PAUL'S FIFTH APOSTOLICAL JOURNEY, ... 157

NERONIAN PERSECUTION, ... 158

CHAP. IX.—MINISTRY OF ST. PETER, ST. JAMES, AND THE OTHER APOSTLES, AND THEIR COADJUTORS, ... 162

St. Peter, ... 163
St. James the Less, ... 165

PAGE

CHAP. IX.—*Continued.*
St. James, the brother of John, ... 166
St. Andrew, St. Thomas, St. Jude, ... 167
St. Bartholomew, ... 168
St. Philip, St. Simon Zelotes, St. Barnabas, ... 169
St. Matthias, ... 170
St. Matthew, St. Mark, ... 171
St. Luke, ... 172
St. John, ... 173
Philip the Deacon, Timothy, Titus, and other coadjutors of the Apostles, ... 176

CHAP. X.—CHRISTIAN UNITY, ... 179

Heretics, ... 182

PART III.

AGE OF THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

BARNABAS, HERMAS, CLEMENT, IGNATIUS, POLYCARP, ... 191

CHAP. I.—WHAT PARTS OF THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY WERE INTENDED FOR THE MERE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY, ... 194
Unction of the sick, ... 197
Confirmation, ... 198
Extraordinary ministerial offices, ... 199

CHAP. II.—WHAT PARTS OF THE APOSTOLICAL MINISTRY WERE DESIGNED FOR THE PERPETUATION OF CHRISTIANITY, ... 200
New Testament Scriptures, ... 202
The Church, ... 203

CHAP. III.—HOW FAR THE DESIGN OF THE CHURCH'S INSPIRED FOUNDERS WAS PRESERVED OR FOLLOWED UP BY THE FIRST UNINSPIRED CHURCHES, OR THEIR RULERS, ... 216
HOW THE FIRST UNINSPIRED CHURCH FULFILLED ITS OFFICE OF PRESERVING AND ATTESTING THE SACRED RECORD, ... 216
The Public Reading of the Scriptures, ... 217
Quotations from, and allusions to, the Scriptures of the New Testament, in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, ... 219
Collection of the New Testament Scriptures, ... 224

PAGE

CHAP. IV.—How the first Uninspired Church fulfilled its offices of Dispensing the truths contained in the Sacred Record, ... 230

Ministers of different orders, ... 230
Public Reading of the Scriptures, ... 234
Preaching, ... 235
Official Epistles, ... 236
Appointment and Maintenance of Ministers, ... 237
Bishops Apostolically Ordained, ... 237
Propagation of the Faith by Missionaries, ... 240
The Church at Jerusalem, ... 243
The Church at Rome, ... 245
The Church at Alexandria, ... 250
Schools, Catechists, and Catechisms, ... 250

CHAP. V.—How the first Uninspired Church fulfilled its office of conveying Divine Grace, ... 253

Christian Rites, ... 254
Baptism, ... 255
The Lord's Supper, ... 258
Agapæ, or Love Feasts, ... 261
Public Prayers, ... 267
Certain Rites which fall into a distinct Class, ... 268
Ordination, Confirmation, &c. 269

CHAP. VI.—What Measures the first Uninspired Church pursued for Self-preservation, ... 271

Creeds, ... 272
Apostles' Creed, ... 272
Moral Discipline, ... 281
Excommunication, ... 283

CHAP. VII.—What Measures the first Uninspired Church pursued for Self-defence, ... 285

Apologies, ... 286
Martyrdoms, ... 287
Martyrdom of Ignatius, ... 288
Martyrdom of Polycarp, ... 292

Conclusion, ... 298

APPENDIX.

PAGE

A. Egyptian Symbols, ... 303
B. Allegorizing of Pagan Mythology, ... 304
C. Twofold object of the Jewish Scriptures, ... 304
D. Samaritan Canon of Scripture, ... 305
E. Use of Prophecy, ... 307
F. John the Baptist's Embassy to Jesus, ... 312
G. The pretended Correspondence between our Saviour and the King of Edessa, ... 314
H. Epistle to the Hebrews, ... 315
I. Inspiration of Scripture, ... 317
K. Technical Terms in Theology, ... 320

AUTHORITIES QUOTED, ... 322

INDEX, ... 323

THE RISE AND EARLY PROGRESS

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

INTRODUCTION.

Rise of Christianity

HISTORY records no event so interesting and important to man as the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ upon earth. Considered merely in its results on the temporal condition of mankind, neither conquest, legislation, nor philosophy, has affected society so intimately, so extensively, and so permanently, as Christianity; whilst all that concerns our heavenly connexions, seems important, chiefly in proportion as it has been subservient to, or otherwise connected with, this institution. With the former of these views the present inquiry is not concerned; it is directed to the rise and progress of Christianity, considered only so far as it has affected the relation and intercourse between God and men.

Division into the Jewish and Gentile world.

And in order to estimate the nature and extent of that change, which the Saviour's coming has wrought on the religious condition of mankind, as well as the fitness of the means employed for effecting it, it will be first necessary to take a brief survey of the state in which he found religion. It is well known, that, for many centuries preceding the Advent, all the world, except the Jews, a small and otherwise inconsiderable people, were not only in the grossest error on the subject, but without any authentic source to supply them with more correct information. An account therefore of the religion of the Gentiles (as all other nations were termed in distinction from the one favoured people of God) will be rather an account of their *ignorance* than of their *knowledge*. But however widely removed from truth are the opinions and practices which such an account must contain, it will serve the twofold purpose, of instructing us in the sources of that ignorance, and of discovering the propriety of the Christian scheme, wherein truth was so dispensed, as to apply specially to the more important varieties of existing error.

Proceeding from the religion of the Gentiles to that of the Jews, the need of the Gospel dispensation will appear not less in the state of their knowledge, than in that of the heathen ignorance. It was

knowledge insufficient not only in quantity but in kind; partial, not because confined to a few truths, but because the truths which it embraced were each designedly incomplete, and requiring some afterpiece of revelation to render it intelligible and effective.

Besides the religion of the Gentiles and of the Jews, that of the Samaritans (narrow as was its extent and influence) will deserve some slight separate notice, owing to certain peculiarities in its origin and character, which distinguish it from the Jewish on the one hand, and still more from all the heathen creeds and modes of worship on the other.

I.—RELIGION OF THE GENTILES.

All religions from one common origin.

WERE history silent, the concurrent traditions and fables of all nations concerning a chaos, a deluge, and a re-peopling of the earth from a single family, would suggest the inference, that out of one origin proceeded the religions of all the Gentile world. But this conclusion is more directly deduced from the Bible. At the dispersion of mankind after the attempt to build Babel,[1] the wanderers, we know, possessed a certain portion of revelation, which they must have carried with them into their respective settlements; nor is it reasonable to suppose that this knowledge, however it might be neglected, would be soon altogether effaced. Limited as the compass of sacred history becomes from that period, still it affords instances amongst the heathen of priests and worshippers of Jehovah. Such were Job, Melchisedech, and Jethro the father-in-law of Moses. In Balaam we recognise not only a believer, but one divinely inspired.

Without denying, then, the tendency or the capacity of mankind to create a system of religion for themselves, it may be fairly assumed that no period has yet occurred, which has afforded an opportunity for the experiment. Certainly the ancient heathen creeds could not have been originally the mere invention of fancy, or the independent deductions of reason, but rather the corruption of revealed religion—extending, it may be, in most instances, so far, that in process of time the foundation should be concealed and

[1] The building of Babel forms the first great era in the history of idolatry. The work is described in the Bible, literally, as "a tower whose top was to the heavens," and the confusion as a confusion of "lip." Herodotus mentions the existence of such a building at Babylon in his time, (Lib. I. C. 181,) and states that it was dedicated to the Assyrian Jupiter. Diodorus Siculus (Lib. II.) gives nearly the same account of it. Now, comparing these statements—the heathen with the sacred—we are perhaps warranted in interpreting the latter, as descriptive of a tower whose top was dedicated to the heavens as to an object of idolatrous worship, Jupiter being well understood by all to be the air or the heavens. (See Prideaux's Connexion, Vol I. Part 1. Book II. ann. 570.)

It was, doubtless, in reference to the heavens being the first and chief object of idolatry among the ancients, that the holy Scriptures open with the declaration, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" thus claiming for Jehovah, (what none of the heathen ever ascribed to their deities,) the creation of the world, and including in the work of creation all that men called gods.

buried under the superstructure. Nevertheless, any attempt to trace the origin and progress of false religion, or any estimate of its character, which should have no reference to its connexion with the true, would be as unreasonable as an inquiry into the formation of language, which should neglect all consideration of a portion of it being co-existent with the gift of speech.

Reasoning from the scriptural account of the several lapses of the Israelites into heathenish worship, it would seem that polytheism did not originally imply a disbelief in the unity of God; neither were the objects of false worship originally substituted for, or associated with, Jehovah. In short, they were not regarded as possessing a similar nature with his. Thus, when the people, despairing of the return of Moses from Mount Sinai, persuaded Aaron to make them gods, both the occasion and the motive assigned plainly indicate, that the golden calf was not intended as a substitute for the Lord, but for Moses; not a God, in the same meaning of the term as when it was applied to Jehovah, but a medium of communication between them and the Lord. "Up," (said they to Aaron,) "make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." And accordingly when the image was made, and the altar was built before it, still the proclamation was, "To-morrow there is a feast unto the Lord," meaning Jehovah.[2]

Original character of Polytheism.

That the Israelites then did not consider polytheism as implying a disbelief in the unity of God, will hardly be denied. That the heathen originally adopted it under the same impression, is also highly probable. But what, it may be asked, could have suggested to the early world, possessing as they did the knowledge and belief that God is one, a system so strange, and apparently incongruous, as polytheism? Was it the mere wantonness of fancy? or was there any doctrine of revelation known to all, and thus liable to become perverted by all? Such a doctrine there is. A belief in angels and ministering spirits appears in the earliest records of God's dispensations; nor can there be any difficulty in fixing on this article of belief as the point from which religion first began to diverge into error, and superstition, and impiety. Men, for instance, attributing whatever blessings they received from God to the intermediate agency of his good angels, would (if neglectful of the appointed preservatives against error) fall into an undue regard and reverence for these ministers of good. A kindly season, the rains which caused their corn to grow, the sun which ripened it, would become associated in their effects with some invisible superintendent, the agent and the creature of God. Hence the worship of the heavenly bodies, and of the various parts and operations of nature. Again, men great and good in their generation would, as time rendered their history more and more marvellous, be converted

The doctrine of Angels and other ministering beings, the point from which true Religion diverged into false:

These associated with the heavenly bodies, and other striking features of nature:

[2] Exod. xxxii. 5. In the original it is "Jehovah."

Also with public benefactors: And with persons eminently mischievous to society.

into Beings above man's ordinary nature, and connected more with the invisible than the visible world; whilst the robbers, tyrants, and mighty "hunters" of the earth, would supply the popular creed with evil deities. It is observable, too, that neither the good deities were represented as perfectly good, nor the evil deities as altogether evil. The Grecian Furies are terrible, but just. The dwellers in the Heavenly Olympus have human passions, human infirmities, and human vices. The notion of good and evil, as separate principles in the constitution of the universe, was philosophical.

Transition to idolatry or image worship.

Idolatry would be the necessary and early result of these popular notions. An image, originally that of a man, (for to sensible objects only would images be originally applied,) would, in process of time, represent the super-human being into which fable had converted him; and to the deity, so represented, rites would be instituted, consisting partly of the sepulchral honours paid to the man, and partly of such as were appropriated to the tutelary spirit. In the former we may discern the origin of the impurities and immorality of heathen worship; in the latter its impiety. Rites commemorative of human benefactors, naturally contained some reference to those habits of life, to which when living they had been most addicted. Hence, even in the memorials of the wise and brave, the warrior's grave would be stained with the blood of human victims; whilst the frailties and infirmities of the sage and legislator, would be preserved in Bacchanalian revels, or in the filthy and disgusting emblems of the Phallics.

Idolatry the source of immorality as well as of impiety:

Not confined to human figures.

Nor was this motley adoration addressed to men alone. Whatever was admirable or useful in the whole compass of nature, (it being once assumed that its effects on mankind depended on the exercise of a power delegated to one of the host of heaven,) became invested with similar associations, and was adopted as symbolical of these unseen stewards of Providence. This was most remarkably the case in Egypt, where beasts, birds, reptiles, and plants became instruments of idolatry, and the works of nature were made to answer the purpose of graven images and other artificial symbols. With the Egyptians, too, the use of hieroglyphic characters co-operated to produce the same effect. The ox, for instance, was an obvious symbol of husbandry; and an ox, distinguished by colour or by any other arbitrary sign, of him who was their first or chief instructor in agriculture. When ceremonies and sacrifices were appropriated to this public benefactor, and his human character had been lost or blended with that of a tutelary spirit, the hieroglyphic figure under which he had been recorded in this monumental history, would suggest in the living animal a still more appropriate and vivid emblem. Thus the ox would become to the Egyptian idolater what the work of Phidias or Praxiteles was to the Greek. Then a further process of association would produce further results.[3] The deity

Egypt notorious for brute worship: occasioned by their use of hieroglyphics.

[3] See Appendix [A.]

would in time be believed to be mysteriously combined with the animal;[4] and thus the same principle, which led at Athens to the banishment of him who was hardy enough to assert that the statue of Minerva was but a block of dull marble,[5] made it sacrilege in Egypt to slay a cat or a stork.

Illustration and confirmation of the foregoing statement from the means used by Divine Providence to preserve the Israelites from false worship.

To advert once more to the case of the Israelites.—The methods adopted by Divine wisdom in the Mosaic dispensation to preserve them from false worship, are highly illustrative of this view of its origin and early nature. That they might have the less temptation and pretext for worshipping any of the host of heaven, Jehovah condescended to become to them God in both senses of the term; not only as the one, distinct, supreme, uncreated Being, but also as the tutelary Power presiding over their nation. "I am the Lord, *thy God*, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt," is a declaration, which, considered together with the errors into which they so soon fell after their departure from Egypt, may be fairly interpreted as indicating, that in his dispensation to them he employed no ministering spirit. With the same view, it would seem, that the remonstrance was made against their desire to have a king, inasmuch as without a king they were likely to look more *immediately* to Jehovah as their governor, and guide, and judge. In several other peculiarities of their polity as directed by God, we may trace the same merciful[6] intent to remove from them a temptation which proved so fatal to all the nations of the world: in none more, than in the exclusion from their view of a state of future rewards and punishments,[7] whereby their attention was fixed and limited to that portion of his dispensation, which, with a more comprehensive revelation, they might have rashly deemed the less worthy of him, and likely to be delegated to angels or to men. Nor was it until the original character of idolatry, as practised by the nations around them, was changed and lost, that their prophets were commissioned to point to a better country than Canaan, and a worse bondage than that of Egypt or Assyria.

1 Sam. viii.

Religion once corrupted soon became utterly depraved.

To this state of change and utter depravation the Gentile religion rapidly advanced. The worship of God being once transferred to his creatures, henceforth religion became liable to all the accidents and modifications of a mere human institution. Its claim to a holier name and a higher authority was admitted as a matter of courtesy, but proofs and title-deeds were lost. To the inquiring

[4] Herodotus, Lib. II. Cap. 65, represents the Egyptians as εὐχομένοι τῷ θεῷ τοῦ ἂν ᾖ τὸ θηρίον, which indicates that their worship was not addressed to the brute, but to the deity with which it was supposed to be possessed.

[5] The name of this unfortunate freethinker was Stilpo. (See Diog. Laert. L. II. Sect. 116.) A similar fate befel Anaxagoras, the first who is said to have taught them the doctrine of one supreme Being. He was condemned to die for calling their Apollo (or the Sun) a mass of burning matter. (Ibid. Sect. 12.)

[6] *I.E.* merciful to mankind at large, for it should be borne in mind, that God's favour to his chosen people was shown with a view to preserve religion, not for them exclusively, but for all the world.

[7] Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses.

mind all was foolishness and fable, to the vulgar it was only custom. And thus it was handed down from one generation to another, sometimes the toy of fancy, sometimes the engine of state policy; or, if the serious regard of any were arrested by it, as by an ancient monument of unearthly record, the characters on it were so worn, through time, neglect, and outrage, that all attempt to decipher them was fruitless, and all reasoning on their import conjectural.

Stages of corruption different in different countries.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the progress of false religion through its various shapes was not the same among the several Gentile nations. It has been questioned, for instance, whether the Persians ever proceeded to image-worship, and it has been also asserted that the Scythians never did. Among the Celtic nations, undoubtedly, (and they were probably of the same faith originally, as they were of the same stock with these latter,) idolatrous figures were first introduced by their Roman invaders.[8] Egypt, on the other hand, luxuriated in all the refinement and subtlety of idolatry, so as even to excite the disgust and contempt of other nations.

> "Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens
> Ægyptus portenta colat? Crocodilon adorat
> Pars hæc; illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibin.
> Effigies sacri nitet aurea cercopitheci,
> Dimidio magicæ resonant ubi Memnone chordæ,
> Atque vetus Thebe centum jacet obruta portis.
> Illic cœruleos, hic piscem fluminis, illic
> Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam.
> Porrum et cæpe nefas violare, aut frangere morsu.
> O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis
> Numina!"[9]

Differences occasioned by certain national peculiarities.

And besides this difference of form and outward cast, which is observable in the different branches of the Gentile religion, there are other characteristics belonging to each, more strongly marked, and more essentially distinct. Thus, the Persian kindling his devotion in the blaze of an eastern sun; the German and the Briton seeking it beside the blood-stained altar in the chilling gloom of a forest; the Egyptian carrying it about him like a disease, which rendered him morbidly sensitive to the supposed influence of the herb beneath his feet, and the reptile which crossed his path: the Roman combining it with war, triumph, or luxury; and the Greek with the arts, with poetry, and with philosophy,—are worshippers differing not so much in the nature of the objects adored, as in the frame of their devotion, in the ties which bound them to their faith, and in whatever may be supposed to result from a combination of national peculiarities, imparting each something to religion, and

[8] Tacitus (De Moribus Germ. C. 9,) represents the Germans as worshipping originally "secretum illud quod sola reverentia vident." See also Cæsar, Lib. VI. C. 20.

[9] Juvenal, Sat. XV. See also Diodorus Siculus, (Bibl. Hist. Lib. I. Cap. 83, 84,) who speaks of the various forms of Egyptian idolatry, as more easy to relate than to credit. Mosheim has reconciled the apparent inconsistencies of history, with respect to these and the like statements, in an admirable note on Cudworth's Intellectual System, C. IV. Sect. 18.

operating all to force it into that shape which might best accord with the whole national character.

Among these sources of difference, none deserve a specific notice more than the fine arts, especially sculpture and poetry.

Effect of Sculpture.

Brief mention has already been made of the probable rise and progress of image worship. Its result on the popular conceptions of the Divine nature is curious and instructive. Sculpture, of all the imitative arts, addresses itself most palpably and unequivocally to the bodily perceptions. Let it represent what it may, its subject forthwith becomes material; its form must be defined, its substance measured, and to all incorporeal associations it yields unkindly and reluctantly. What wonder then that the great mass of a people, habituated from childhood to contemplate their deities so represented, should, in defiance of reason itself, entertain no higher notions of the Divine than of the human nature? One can hardly say how far such early impressions may retain their hold, even on more enlightened and speculative minds; nor, with the existence of such a phenomenon, can we wonder at the doctrine which some attributed to the Stoics, that the Supreme Being was corporeal.[10]

What has been here suggested will derive some support from contrasting the Greek and Roman superstitions with those of the northern and oriental nations. In the former a divine vision was somewhat familiar to mortal eyes, at best "the gods came down to men in the shape of men;" but the Persian found no description immaterial and extra-human enough for his Genii and Peris; and in the sombre imagination of the northern enthusiast,

> "The mountain mist took form and limb
> Of noontide hag, or goblin grim."

It is true, that, with the highly-gifted idolaters of ancient Greece, sculpture became not merely an *imitative* but an imaginative art. In their hands it went as far into the province of fancy and pure intellect, as its nature possibly allows it to go. With them, therefore, its use for religious purposes had not exactly the same tendency, as with nations among whom it was more rude and uncouth. The brutal thirst for blood, for instance, instilled into the heart of the warrior who bowed before a monster like Bel or Dagon, could have found no incitement in the classical image of Mars, arrayed in all the beauty of art, and conveying the stern inspiration of war, softened and humanized by the medium through which it passed. It was more like, in its effects, to the fair hand buckling on the spur or presenting the banner, in the days of chivalry. Still all this was no corrective of that peculiar bias which the mind received from the habitual contemplation of sculptured deity; and in none more conspicuously than in the most refined nations, has the wisdom of that restriction been justified, which forbade the Israelites, not the worship alone, but the most harmless use of images.

[10] See Cic. De Nat. Deorum, Lib. II. C. 17, compared with Lib. III. C. 9—25.

Effect of Poetry.

Still greater was the effect of poetry. What Herodotus[11] has asserted of Hesiod and Homer, that from them the Greeks learned their theology, is nearly true of the earlier poets of all nations. The ancient heroes of each country form the first and natural theme of its bards; and these either had passed into the rank of gods, or were intimately connected with others who had attained that eminence.

Embracing then as his subject gods and departed heroes, the poet encountered a twofold difficulty. In his description of the gods, it required no slight exercise of genius and fancy to create a definite image of a divine nature, active, and employed in an appropriate sphere of activity, without exposing it to so exact a scrutiny, as might betray the materials of which it was composed, and destroy the illusion. The task was doubtless easier where it was aided by the same efforts in the sculptor, but in all nations the method adopted was the same. They took as their basis a human being, and by amplifying its several qualities, and extending the sphere of their exercise, undertook to produce a god—a being not merely superior, but of a different nature from man. All their taste and ingenuity were put to the test, in keeping out of view those qualities which might betray the real character of this pretended divinity.

But a more trying task awaited the poet, in his representation of man as existing in a future state. The popular creed admitted no idea of bodily existence in a future state, but only of the existence of the soul. How then were men to be brought on the scene, divested of all which rendered them objects of perception? The same materials were again resorted to, and human nature was again moulded by the fancy into an immaterial essence. In the former instance it was a system of *amplification*, in this it was one of *diminution*. The disembodied man was described, by sometimes concealing one of his corporeal qualities, sometimes another, and so shifting the point of view, as never to expose more at once, than was barely enough to render the figure perceptible. For an illustration of this we may refer to almost any passage in the sixth book of the Æneid, or the twelfth book of the Odyssey. Thus when Virgil brings his hero into the presence of the Grecian ghosts:[12]

> "Ut *videre* virum, fulgentiaque arma per umbras,
> Ingenti *trepidare* metu: pars *vertere terga*,
> Ceu quondam petiere rates."

He had made them see, move, and turn their backs. This was carrying the image almost too near; he therefore makes his escape at the close:

> "pars tollere vocem
> Exiguam: inceptus clamor *frustratur* hiantes."

Homer, who was a more plain-spoken and inartificial poet, by a

[11] Lib. II. C. 53. [12] Æneid, Lib. VI. 490.

whimsical contrivance allowed himself greater latitude in his pantasmagoria; but, as if apologizing for his boldness, he occasionally puts in an avowal, that what he has so dressed up as to seem flesh and blood, has no more substance than a dream:

> αὕτη δίκη ἐστὶ βροτῶν, ὅτε κέν τε θάνωσίν·
> Οὐ γὰρ ἔτι σάρκας τε καὶ ὀστέα ἶνες ἔχουσιν,
> Ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν τε πυρὸς κρατερὸν μένος αἰθομένοιο
> Δαμνᾷ, ἐπεί κε πρῶτα λίπῃ λευκὴ ὀστέα θυμός·
> Ψυχὴ δ' ἠΰτ' ὄνειρος ἀποπταμένη πεπότηται.[13]

Now these fictions being interwoven with the most vivid, if not the most serious, notions of religion, to the Divine nature was attributed all that was found in the human character—passions, prejudices, infirmities; and the stories which adhered to each god out of his true and original history as a man were perpetuated, and contributed still further to degrade the character of the deities. Add to this, that so palpable were the fabulous ingredients which were mixed up with what was taught as serious truth, that the least reflection on the subject was productive of scepticism and disbelief. Hence Pythagoras represented Hesiod and Homer doing penance in hell,[14] and Plato, the most poetical of philosophers, condemned all mythological poetry, even that of Homer, as unfit for the perusal of the young.[15]

Poetry as a vehicle of Religious story fatal to its credit.

Similar to this was the effect produced on the belief of a future state. The efforts of the poets, to make positive images of what only admitted of a negative description, reduced the notion of future existence to nothing. The rewards of the good were only shadows dealt out to shadows, and the punishments of the wicked the same. No wonder that the chequered scene of real life should be boldly maintained to be preferable to the fair but unsubstantial glories of Elysium, or even of the heavenly mansions.

> Βουλοίμην κ' ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θητευέμεν ἄλλῳ
> Ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρῳ, ᾧ μὴ βίοτος πολὺς εἴη,
> Ἢ πασιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν,[16]

was a sentiment, thought not unworthy of the high-minded Achilles, by the poet from whose works so many were content to derive their creed.

From this view of the subject it would appear, that the religion of the Gentiles must have lost ground from its connexion with the fine arts and poetry. In another point of view, however, (which will be briefly adverted to by and by,) they made ample amends to it for the injury. It is time now to consider what provision had

Credit of Religion maintained through the Mysteries.

[13] Odyss. Lib. XI. 217.
[14] Diogenes Laertius, Lib. VIII.
[15] De Republica, Lib. III. Cicero, in his Tusculan Disputations, (Lib. II. C. 11,) where Plato's censure is spoken of, seems to have overlooked the chief motive for it.
[16] Odyss. Lib. XI. 488.

been made by the policy of legislators against these and other casual sources of irreligion.

This consisted in the establishment of those remarkable institutions, the Mysteries. Their origin has generally been attributed to Egypt, and their progress from that country to the rest of the Gentile world, has been traced through the legislators or founders of states, which Egypt either sent forth or instructed. According to the conjectures of some, they were the invention of a crafty priesthood, employed in maintaining their influence by investing religion with imposing and solemn circumstances. The author of the "Divine Legation of Moses" has, by the application of an immense body of learning to the subject, set them in the light of political devices, originating with the legislators, and designed to support civil society, by inculcating the doctrine of a future state. [17]

Conjectures respecting their origin.

Probably the priests devised these, or the institutions out of which they were formed, solely with a view to the support of religion; and statesmen and legislators, observing the success of the stratagem, contrived to have them moulded so as to suit their political views. Co-operating with the priest in the furtherance of his general object, they might both combine to give prominence to the great political doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment. In many instances, doubtless, the priest would himself be the chief man of the nation, as was the case with Melchisedech, and with Anius, whom Virgil describes as

"rex idem hominum, Phœbique sacerdos." [18]

Their general adoption by states and people widely different in their other customs, plainly shows their importance to religion, whether supported on its own account, or for the sake of good government. Every where the celebration of the rites was a secret, and the most awful penalties were affixed to the divulging of it.[19] Every where also the secret was twofold, one for the great body of those who applied for admission, and another contained in a second initiation, reserved for a select few. In both some preparatory discipline was requisite, but in this latter it was rendered so inconvenient and even terrible, as to repress the curiosity or ambition of all, except those who from their rank in society, or from a higher tone of mind, sought it as a mark of distinction from the vulgar.

The secret of the Mysteries twofold:

In this was displayed the policy of the institution. The exoteric doctrine, contained in the first initiation, was essential to the support of the popular religion, and of its great political feature, the dread of punishment after death. In this, therefore, was asserted the real existence of the gods, and the duty of public sacrifice and of

The reason of this.

[17] Book V. [18] Eneid, Lib. III. 80. [19] See Meursii Eleusinia, C. 20.

EX. LIBRIS
REV. C. W. SULLIVAN

obedience to the laws, as constituting a character meet for future reward.

Those who were admitted to the second initiation, and instructed in the esoteric doctrine, were intrusted, it appears, with a secret, which at first view might seem inconsistent with the alleged application and intent of the Mysteries; for it exposed the true nature of the gods, and made a future state a dream.[20] But it might have been deemed necessary or useful that the nature of the error should be partially known, so that there might be always a supply of persons the better qualified to preserve it, from their very knowledge of its weakness. It might also have been deemed more prudent to confess the truth to bold and inquiring minds, than to allow men to discover it for themselves, and to make use of it as their own acquisition and property. On this principle we may conjecture why Socrates declined initiation, and why this refusal was imputed to him as somewhat suspicious in his character.[21] In this, then, the tales of Tartarus and Elysium were explained away into fable and allegory, and the soul was represented as a portion of the Divine essence in a state of temporary separation from its source, and destined to return to its original condition either immediately upon death, or after passing through certain migrations, the object and necessity of which was to purify it from all that was extraneous to it.

Whether the Gentiles derived any clearer views from the dispersed Jews.

Over all this scene of darkness, superstition, and fraud, the wide dispersion of the Jews might be expected to have scattered some rays of truth. To this source has been traced the general expectation which preceded the birth of the Messiah. National vanity, and the approaching crisis of long-cherished hopes, might have prompted the Jews to disclose this part of the Scriptures, however reserved they may be supposed to have been on other topics of religion. In their zeal for making proselytes, they might likewise have occasionally taught purer views of the Divine nature; but if so, their instruction does not appear to have created generally any higher notion concerning Jehovah, than as of the tutelary deity of their nation. Their boasted claim to his peculiar care, perhaps tended to encourage this misconstruction.

Unlikely from their belief in the supremacy of Fate.

One doctrine certainly there was, vaguely but universally entertained by the Gentile world, which was inconsistent with more correct views of God, than those above attributed to it. It was the belief in fate, necessity, or by whatever other name was expressed that mysterious principle, by which all that is divine or human was supposed to be controlled. Its supreme dominion was a main article in the popular creeds of all nations. It was supposed to circumscribe the free agency of the gods themselves, and even to assign a term to their existence. Prometheus is represented by Æschylus as

[20] Warburton's Divine Legation, B. II.

[21] Luciani Demonax. Sect. 11.

solacing his spirit, when galled under the tyranny of Jupiter, by the reflection, that even this Lord of gods and men could not escape the sentence which fate had pronounced on him. And that sentence was annihilation.[22]

The effect of this notion, even on the creed of the learned, was considerable. It was professedly maintained by the Stoics, and occasionally and perhaps unconsciously biassed the speculations of all sects, even of those who discarded it from their systems, or refused to recognise its existence as an independent principle.

The notion of Fate considered further.

The term fate, in its original import, is something uttered, a decree, a law, or expression of authority of some kind. To admit the existence of such a law, involves the admission of two further truths,—that there is a being who framed it, and that there is a subject to which it is applicable. Now if in its subject be embraced human affairs, (as was the Gentile doctrine,) and the law be not derived from God, nor controllable by him, the Being from whom it proceeds must at least hold divided empire with him, and the notion of one distinct and supreme nature is destroyed. Nevertheless, in this doctrine of fate, however corrupted and abused,—in this universal impression of a supreme Word which could not be reversed or gainsaid, we may possibly discover the last imperfect remnant of the true religion, as it existed at the era when men first began to corrupt it.

Superstitious arts which seem to have arisen out of it.

With the Gentiles, however, it rather served to perplex their view of a Supreme Being, and gave rise to the most mischievous and artful contrivances of their religion. Under a pretence of discovering the application of the eternal decrees of fate to any given case, the wily, or enthusiastic, took on them the characters of soothsayers, augurs, and magicians. The abodes of those most famous for their skill became the seats of oracles, and their art was transferred to their successors, and at length associated with the places. Agreeably to this notion, few oracles appear to have existed in the earliest ages of which there is any record, and the business of the oracle was performed by the soothsayer.

These arts differing according to the general character of Religion in the several parts of the world.

These arts and fraudulent practices of course took a tinge from the general character of religion, as it existed in different parts of the world. Thus in Egypt, where the doctrine of the Metempsychosis was most prevalent, they were connected with magical rites, and the consulting of departed souls. In the East, where the heavenly bodies were worshipped and were supposed to represent demons and spirits, the Wise men pretended to apply to these sources for supernatural information. So arose the practice and the name of Astrology. The flight of birds, and the character of the entrails

[22] Æschyli Prom. v. 527. Many similar sentiments will readily occur to the classical reader: *e.g.* πρὸς τὴν ἀνάγκην οὐδ' Ἄρης ἀνθίσταται. Sophoclis Frag. Δοῦλοι βασιλέων εἰσὶν· ὁ δὲ βασίλεως Θεῶν, ὁ Θεὸς ἀνάγκης. Philemonis Reliq. See the remarks of Gassendi and others in the notes on Cudworth's Intellect. System, p. 56, and Mosheim's Dissert. ad Hist. Eccl. Pertinentes, Vol. I. p. 355.

in victims, (the materials of augury,) may perhaps have been connected with the notion of the soul, the divine principle, migrating through the bodies of these animals; a doctrine not unknown to the ancient Etrurians, to whom is attributed the invention of this art.[23]

Cause of the cessation of Oracles.

Of all these, the influence of oracles, originally the greatest, was the earliest overturned. Their extinction at the period of the Advent has been attributed to the miraculous expulsion of the spirits which presided over them on the appearance of Christ in the world. But there are natural causes to which it might certainly be referred. The machinery employed in them was more complicated and clumsy, and less easily disguised, than that used in the other similar arts, except perhaps magic. Besides which, all the arts of prescience had at some period or other enjoyed the patronage of the great empires and ruling powers of the world, and through their influence had been spread and upheld. Such had been the case with oracles in Greece, with magic in Egypt, astrology in Chaldæa and the East, with augury at Rome. At the commencement of the Christian era, Rome was all and sole powerful. Augury being the national art, was patronized by the government; astrology and magic (although contrary to law) received a still more powerful support from the secret practice of individuals of rank, even of the Emperors themselves.[24] Oracles alone, having lost all accidental support, fell into disrepute and disuse. Something like an allusion to this capricious transfer of credulity may be observed in those lines of Juvenal:—

> "Quicquid
> Dixerit Astrologus, credent a fonte relatum
> Ammonis; quoniam Delphis oracula cessant,
> Et genus humanum damnat caligo futuri."[25]

Whether the errors of the Heathen received any correction from Philosophy before the rise of the Grecian Sects.

As long as the learning of the Gentile world was confined to the priest, the statesman, and the lawgiver, it was uniformly employed in these and whatever other superstitious practices tended to maintain the popular religion, and, through that, order and decorum. The Brachmans and the Magi might have despised the vulgar errors of their countrymen, but their more enlightened views were kept to themselves, or else cautiously communicated through the interior doctrine of the Mysteries. But, in truth, as far as there is any ground for conjecture, the wise men of old, comprehending

[23] Cicero de Divinat. Lib. I. C. 2. Ovidii Met. Lib. XV. 558. The connexion, which has been here suggested, between augury and the belief that life, in man and brute alike, was a particle of the Divine essence, seems to be countenanced by the fact, that the entrails were examined whilst in the act apparently of parting with, and exhibiting, as it were, this imaginary subtle principle, "*Spirantia* consulit exta." There is a ghastly description in Strabo, of the mode of divination practised by the Cimbrian women on human victims. See Lib. VII. p. 425, ed. Falconer.

[24] Taciti Ann. Lib. VI. C. 20. Horace's Canidia, and the several allusions to the practice of magic, which are found in his writings, prove how popular the superstition was in the reign of Augustus. See Epod. V. Epist. Lib. II. 2, V. 208, &c.

[25] Sat. VI. 553.

the Magi, the Brachmans, the Druids, and even the far-famed sages of ancient Greece, exercised their reasoning powers but little, in investigating the truths of religion. They were occupied in perpetuating and expounding immemorial traditions, rather than in pursuing independent inquiries by the light of nature. They were priests and politicians, not philosophers.

To this latter character none have any claim before the rise of those celebrated schools of Greek philosophy, which divided the learned world at the period of the Advent.

How far these were influenced in the publication of their opinions by ancient custom.

Yet even with these so strongly did the old custom operate, that in their teaching and writing they preserved a distinction similar to that which obtained in the Mysteries, and always framed an exoteric, as well as an esoteric system.[26] Their genuine opinions on religion were intrusted as secrets to a few, whilst publicly they maintained the grossest doctrines of the popular creed. Nay, to such an extent did they carry this sense of duty as good citizens, that when Euemerus made the alarming discovery of the secret of the Mysteries, the philosophers were the most active in replacing the veil which had been drawn aside; and much of that allegorical interpretation of the more absurd parts of the popular theology was applied to this purpose,[27] which has since exercised the ingenuity of one greater than the ancient sages.[28]

The double doctrine of the Philosophers.

Owing to this double doctrine, the religious views of the philosophers exhibit an endless tissue of inconsistency, which renders it (even with this key) not always easy to discover what was their opinion as philosophers, what their doctrine as good citizens; and to the age for which they wrote, it doubtless answered the purpose of keeping their light under a bushel.

Their speculations on the divine and human nature not always of a Religious character.

Besides, although they speculated much on the nature of God and of man, yet these speculations were not always applicable to religion. All religious inquiry, strictly speaking, is directed to the nature of God *as connected with man*, or again to the nature and condition of man *as connected with God*. Metaphysical discussions on the Divine nature, similar to those in which an attempt is made to analyze or arrange the principles of the human mind, are sometimes indeed confounded with religious views, but are really compatible with the most complete denial of all religion. Religious obligation arises not from the absolute nature of God, but from its relation to us. Accordingly Epicurus and his followers were content to admit the existence of a divine Being, as a philosophical truth, provided it was granted that he had no connexion with the

[26] Pythagoras, who resided many years in Egypt, and was there initiated in the Mysteries, introduced the practice into the famous Italic school, (Jamblichus, de Vita Pythag. C. VI.) which was the parent of the Eleatic, Heraclitan, Epicurean, and Sceptic sects. But it was not confined to the sects of any one family, nor to the philosophy of any one country. For an account of Aristotle's two Classes, see A. Gellius, Lib. XX. C. 5.

[27] See Appendix [B.]

[28] See Lord Bacon's Wisdom of the Ancients.

world.[29] Now much of the speculation of the philosophers was directed to this object, that is, to the absolute nature of God. It was indeed the chief, because it seemed the more scientific inquiry, and the other was only incidental.

Prevailing Sects at the period of the Advent.

The world, at the period in which Christianity was published to it, was divided by the opinions of Epicureans, the Stoics, the Academics, and the Oriental philosophy; which last had arisen out of an alliance between the school of Plato and the eastern creed. To these may be added the Alexandrian school, although it was not until the close of the second century, that this last assumed its peculiar character and importance, in attempting to combine in one Eclectic system, as it was termed, the Christian doctrines, the tenets of the Greek philosophy, and the fanciful theories of Egypt and of the East.

Epicureans.

Of these, the Epicureans, denying the existence, or, what amounts to the same, the authority and providence of God, contributed nothing to the general stock of religious knowledge. The remaining sects, however at issue in other respects, agreed thus far, that the relation between the divine and human nature was that of a whole to its parts; a doctrine which may be considered under two heads.

Theistical Sects.

First, as to the divine essence; that it was the source of the human soul, and the principle into which it would, either immediately after death, or ultimately after certain stages of purification, return and be absorbed. Secondly, as to human nature; that it was partly mortal, partly immortal; destined in one sense to survive death, in another to be destroyed by it. Now both these views fell very far short of what is commonly understood, when the ancients are said to have admitted or discovered the existence of the one true God, and the immortality of the soul. As far as the mere expression goes, they doubtless acknowledged the existence of one God as unequivocally as a Jew or a Christian; but if by the term God they understood a being of a different nature from him acknowledged by Jew and Christian, their mode of expression cannot be reasonably urged as a proof that they coincided with enlightened believers in this fundamental article of faith. Now that this was the case is plain. Taking the human soul as a portion and a sample of the Godhead,[30] their view of a divine source could not have differed essentially from their view of the human soul; it was necessarily endued with parts and passions, and its nature measured and judged of by reference to ours. The Stoics, indeed, (as was before observed,) are by some understood to have gone so far, as to deem a body requisite for the existence of the Divine mind.

Their view of the divine nature.

[29] Cicero represents Velleius as tracing the evils of a belief in religion, not to the doctrine that there is a God, but to the doctrine that he is Lord of the universe. "*Imposuistis in cervicibus nostris sempiternum dominum, quem dies et noctes timeremus, quis enim non timeat omnia providentem et cogitantem, et animadvertentem, et* omnia ad se pertinere putantem, *curiosum, et plenum negotii Deum.*"—De Nat. Deorum, Lib. I. C. 20.

[30] Μόρια Θεοῦ καὶ ἀποσπασμάτια. Arriani Diss. in Epict. Lib. I. C. 14.

Of the immortality of the soul.

Their notions on the second point, were still further removed from what we are apt to understand, when it is asserted that the ancients admitted the immortality of the soul. In truth, the immortality which they inculcated was even inconsistent with the future existence of man *as man*. Far from implying any future consciousness of separate existence, of happiness or misery, it amounted to this,—that a portion of the divine essence had gone forth, (which process some illustrated by the image of emanations and rays proceeding from the fountain of light, until they nearly confounded the thing represented with its emblem,) that whatever substance it pervaded became endued with some modification of life or reason; and that the withdrawing and resuming this vital ray occasioned the phenomena of death. This taking place, the deserted mass of matter went to annihilation, or else returned to a chaos, to await another union with another portion of creative virtue. What has all this in common with the Christian doctrine of the resurrection? Was it not natural that men should consider that doctrine when preached to them as somewhat new, and contradicting all their pre-conceived opinions?

From this view of the philosophical creed of the Gentile world, it will not appear essentially to have differed from the esoteric doctrines of the Mysteries. The credit and authority of those doctrines were nevertheless greatly shaken by their appearance in this new form. Removed from the old basis of tradition, mystery, and state authority, the unsoundness of their foundation became more apparent to vulgar eyes; and the endless variety of opinion which prevailed, without any acknowledged standard, gave a doubtful character to the subject, and deprived every view of it alike of the appearance of divine sanction.

The discussion of Religious subjects by the Greek philosophers unfriendly to the credit of the Gentile Religion.

Accordingly, with the rise and diffusion of philosophy, a disbelief and contempt of religion increased and spread abroad. The ruin of social order began to be predicted in the further growth of scepticism so produced. The wisdom of other nations was extolled, because they did no more than expound the traditions of their fathers, and the Greek philosophy was stigmatized as the source of innovation, and as tending to unsettle men's minds. "Can one do otherwise," exclaims Ælian, "than commend the wisdom of the Barbarians? Amongst them, no one ever fell into atheism; amongst them there are no controversies about the gods, no questioning whether there are really such things or not, and whether they are interested about us or not."[31] In the same spirit Diodorus Siculus complains of the perpetual innovations of the Greek philosophers in the views of their predecessors, even on the most important topics: "The Barbarians," he observes, "go on in one unvarying course, and are firm to their principles; but the Greeks, who consider

[31] Var. Hist. Lib. II. C. 31.

philosophy as a gainful profession, are for setting up new sects, and opposing theory to theory on the most momentous subjects, so that their pupils only acquire the habit of doubting, their minds wander in perpetual uncertainty, and become in short incapable of any firm conviction."[32]

The popular systems of the heathen Religion generally disbelieved.

Not that the belief of the Gentile world was then first shaken, or only by these means. The behaviour of professed believers, under circumstances wherein faith is put to the test, is every where decisive against the existence of such a principle, to any great extent at least.[33] Thus the Athenians are represented by their observant and faithful historian and fellow-citizen, as becoming more and more irreligious, as the ravages of the famous plague at Athens increased;[34] and Pliny, in his account of the eruption of Vesuvius, in which his uncle perished, records amongst the striking events of that awful scene, a general distrust of Divine aid, arising from the notion that the gods themselves were possibly involved in the impending ruin.[35]

Why they were nevertheless adhered to.

Powerful ties there were which bound men to the religion of their fathers; ties which only a Divine hand could have unloosed, but they were not the result of conviction. Religion had become, partly through accident, partly through the policy of legislators, interwoven into the whole system of public and private life. Never separated from the glories of war, or the repose of peace, it came to be considered inseparable from each. Its genius haunted every path of life, and adapted itself to every change of manners and circumstances. In the theatre, the circus, and the midnight revel, it continued as familiar to the degenerate Romans, as when it gave a zest to the rustic festival, or animated the rude pageantry of a triumph, in their days of simple hardihood. The tasteful and imaginative Greek believed it, if belief it may be called, not for its own sake, but for the sake of Homer, and Phidias, and Apelles,—for the sake of the bard whose song was voucher for its truth, and the monuments of art, in which it stood embodied and enshrined. When the suppliant seated himself beside the household gods, and placed on his knee the child of his enemy, he calculated wisely on the principle, which sanctified the gods themselves in the eyes of the father and the master of the family:[36] nor did Julian display less policy, when in his endeavours to restore the reign of paganism, he directed his efforts, not so much to the conviction of men's minds, as to the renewal of these broken associations.[37]

With this view of the Gentile world before us, we shall be able to estimate how far they stood in need of a revelation, what reception they might be expected to give to Christianity, and how the first Christian preachers were likely to shape their teaching, so as to

[32] Biblioth. Hist. Lib. XI. C. 29.
[33] See Whately's Essays on some Peculiarities of the Christian Religion.
[34] Thucyd. Lib. II. C. 53.
[35] Epist. Lib. VI. Ep. 20.
[36] See the description of Themistocles taking refuge with Admetus. Thucyd. Lib. I. C. 136.
[37] See Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. IV. C. 23.

Application of the foregoing remarks to illustrate the mode in which Christianity was first preached and received among the Gentiles.

John xviii. 38.

Probable unwillingness to examine into the evidence of its truth.

render it acceptable or intelligible, and to guard against the errors to which the heathen were most liable. All their systems, we see, were recommended and embraced, because they were useful, or honourable, or convenient. Christianity alone advanced the singular claim of being true, and of being adopted because it was true. Religion had not yet become the subject of *a creed*. Its evidences, a theme so familiar to Christian ears, sounded to the Gentiles as an idle topic, the discussion of which they could not understand to be necessary to the reception of a religion. "What is truth?" said Pilate to Jesus, not surely in jest, as Lord Bacon would explain it, but as if he had asked, What mean you by speaking about truth? what has truth to do with the subject? It was altogether a new way of propagating a religion, to invite converts, not to conform to its institutions, but to *believe*, and to let their actions be agreeable to truth; and nothing was more natural, than that Christianity should receive names expressive of this grand peculiarity, the Truth and the Faith.

Prejudice likely to be strong against its claim to exclusive reception.

Independently then of any agreement or disagreement which the Gentiles might find between the doctrines of the Gospel, and their preconceived notions, they would be indisposed to attend to the evidence which attested its Divine authority. There was another unfavourable circumstance about its claims. It could not but seem unreasonable and presumptuous, that one religion should be expected to prevail all over the world, to the exclusion of every other; and that too a religion derived, as it appeared, from a small contemptible tributary of the empire. Had the proposal been merely to have Christianity admitted as one among the many foreign systems patronized at Rome, it would hardly have been rejected; and this indeed seems to have been actually contemplated by Tiberius;[38] but it was deemed preposterous in the Christians to insist on an exclusive claim.

General expectation that an extraordinary person was about to appear.

Bishop Horsley's account of it.

There was one circumstance, indeed, which might seem likely to have awakened the attention of the Gentiles to a more candid and earnest consideration even of these unusual claims. It is well attested, that, at the birth of our Saviour, a very general rumour prevailed, that an extraordinary person was about to appear, and to effect some great change in the condition of the world. Bishop Horsley, learned and ingenious on this as on every subject, accounts for it by supposing prophecies of the Messiah to have been preserved, together with other records of the primitive religion of mankind, in the Sibylline verses, and in other writings of a similar character.[39] Admitting that he has made out a plausible case, his theory is nevertheless liable to this objection, that it supposes the prophecies derived from patriarchal times, to have been more determinate and

[38] Tertulliani Apol. C. V. Eusebii Hist. Lib. II. C. 2.

[39] See Dissertation on the Prophecies relating to the Messiah, dispersed among the heathen.

more easily interpreted, than the corresponding prophecies recorded in Genesis, or even than those of a much later period. For, if we imagine the case of the scriptural prophecies themselves being brought under the notice of the Gentiles, in the same manner as the Sibylline verses were, the Gentiles would never surely have elicited, even from them, the alleged expectation, embracing as it does the precise period of the Messiah's appearance. Perhaps, too, it may be fairly questioned, whether the records of the patriarchal era would not in all likelihood have been handed down in the histrionic form, such as was exhibited in the Mysteries, or by means of rude monuments, rather than as "the Sibyl's leaves." Whether indeed the character and contents of these strange productions were really and altogether such as they are represented, is itself a point on which the inquirer has no means of judging for himself, inasmuch as no specimen of the genuine Sibylline verses has been preserved.

Another account of it.

Those, then, to whom Bishop Horsley's view shall seem unsatisfactory, may be disposed to refer the origin of the expectation (at least as regards the eastern nations) to the Jewish Scriptures. Tacitus and Suetonius, it is to be observed, limit to the eastern world this expectation of an universal monarch arising thence;[40] and nothing is more probable, than that the prophecies of Daniel especially should be familiar to the Persian Magi.

Indeed, that the Gentile view should, like that of the Jewish nation, have been directed to an *universal king*, forms of itself a powerful objection to the notion, that the source of that view was distinct. In the original and primitive view of the Messiah, he would surely have been characterised as *the Antagonist of evil*, or *the Purifier of man's corrupt nature*. The notion of *dominion* as a prominent feature in his office, carries on the face of it the Jewish bias of interpreting *literally* their later prophecies, which described him *metaphorically* as one *qui rerum potiretur*.

It is remarkable, too, that the Jews, from the period of their being intrusted with those prophecies which were likely to be most intelligible to the heathen, were, as if by special appointment, brought more immediately into intercourse with the most powerful and influential nations of the world,—with the Assyrians and Babylonians, with the Persians, with the Greeks, and lastly with the Romans. Of these, the Greeks and Romans, it may be said, were little likely to have studied the sacred volume, even had their attention been solicited to it by those in whose hands it was deposited. Yet even these could hardly fail of imbibing some notion of the Messiah, and of the fulness of the time, from the conversation of the Jews, who were every where resident amongst them. National vanity, and the ardour of a hope such as theirs about to be fulfilled, must have tempted them to descant on this, however reserved in general

[40] Taciti Hist. Lib. V. C. 13. Sueton. Vespasian, C. 4.

on religious topics; and the more as the fated period drew nearer. The notion having once gained ground among the Gentiles, they would naturally enough see it intimated likewise in their national oracles, whose number, variety, and generality, fitted them to furnish almost any view of any subject. Thus the attention of men being once directed to the topic, the vague descriptions of the Sibylline verses might have been applied to a specific time and person, and have become useful for the intrigue of the politician, or the delicate flattery of the poet.[41]

Why Christianity received no support from this expectation.

Viewing this general expectation of the heathen world, then, as derived either directly or indirectly from the Holy Scriptures, we shall be at no loss to account for the small influence it had in exciting the curiosity of the Gentiles to inquire more eagerly concerning the expected Great One, of those who proclaimed him as having now appeared, and as having sent them forth as his delegates. He who was to come, was viewed, through the prejudiced medium of Judaism, as a temporal prince. But the obscure birth of Jesus, his unambitious course of life, and his meek submission to a humiliating death, seemed at once to render the prophecy inapplicable to him. None other appearing to claim its application, according to this view, it was probably soon forgotten or disregarded. No appeal, none at least that we know of, was ever made to it by the Apostles, nor do any of the Gentiles, to whom they went, appear to have connected their mission with it.[42]

As to the Gospel itself, its doctrines and its precepts, the facility with which the Gentiles would understand or embrace them, would of course depend much on their existing views of morals, of the Divine nature, and of a future state.

Its moral precepts generally such as to meet with a ready reception.

In the systems of the Greek philosophers they possessed moral rules, the close agreement of which with the Gospel precepts could not but cause the latter to be familiar, and ensure them a favourable reception. Here was the proper sphere of Reason, and she had done her part nobly. It is not perhaps too much to assert, that, with the exception of forgiveness of injury and humility, the heathen sketch of the moral character (such as is found, for instance, in the Ethics of Aristotle) required no feature to be added, but only some correction and a higher finish. This, be it remembered, detracts nothing from the character of the Gospel. To deny it, were indeed to wrong religion and its inspired teachers, in more respects than one. For, first, if the Gentiles had not the faculties

[41] See Virgil's Pollio, and Heyne's prefatory remarks. It appears from Dio Cassius and Plutarch, that Julius Cæsar searched the Sibylline verses for some prediction respecting a great king and conqueror, for the purpose of applying it to himself, and assuming the title of king. (Dio Cass. Lib. XLIV. p. 247, and Plutarch in Cæsare, C. 60.) Cicero probably alludes to the fact in his De Divinatione, (L. II. C. 54,) "cum antistibus agamus, ut quidvis potius ex iiis libris, quam Regem proferant."

[42] It was again brought into notice by the rebellion of the Jews, who are said to have rested their hopes of succour on it; and it was then applied by some to Vespasian and Titus. See Tacit. Hist. Lib. V. C. 13, and Euseb. Lib. III. C. 8.

to enable them to arrive at just notions of their duty, how could they be chargeable with that sinfulness which St. Paul imputes to them? Again, what right has the Christian advocate to recommend the Gospel on the score of its morality, if from the Gospel mankind first learned what morality was? It is only arguing in a circle. The truest statement will always be found the most favourable to the Gospel of truth.

Evidence to the truths of the Gospel, arising from this agreement of its precepts with the conclusions of unenlightened Reason.

The connexion between religion and morals is another matter. To this indeed the Gentiles were strangers, and not easily to be reconciled. What Josephus has asserted of his countrymen, was still more applicable to the Christians, contrasted with the heathen.[43] Others made religion a part of virtue, they made virtue a part of religion. The duties of sacrifice, of prayer, and of reverence for the gods, implied no obligation to practise virtue; and the observance of these duties was no otherwise connected with moral behaviour, than as it constituted a part of the character of a good citizen.

Repugnance likely to be felt to the view of Morality as connected with Religion.

There was withal a deep-rooted prejudice concerning the dignity of human nature. Men were supposed capable of raising themselves by merit to the highest scale of existence, and of deserving to be numbered with the gods.

And to any doctrine which should detract from the self-sufficiency of Virtue.

> "Hac arte Pollux et vagus Hercules
> Enisus, arces attigit igneas."[44]

That virtue should not be *entitled* to reward; that the good should find a place in heaven, not as their natural right, but as a favour; and that a great and mysterious atonement was requisite for the sins of each and of all; these were doctrines not merely unacceptable, but almost incomprehensible.

Enough has been already said of the prevailing notions concerning the nature of the gods, to show that the Gentiles were familiar with the conception of a Deity assuming the form and body of man.[45] The doctrine of God manifested in the flesh would not, therefore, be likely to startle them, nor do we accordingly hear of any surprise or scruple which it occasioned. At the same time, nothing could be more revolting to their natural views of such a Being, than that he should lead a life of humiliation and persecution, and submit to an ignominious death. It was Christ *crucified* that was "foolishness to the Greeks."

[43] Adv. Apion, Lib. II. C. 14.

[44] Horat. Carm. Lib. III. 3. So Virgil, Æn. IX. 640:—
"Macte nova *virtute* puer, *sic itur ad astra.*"

[45] The heathen view must not, however, be confounded with the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. It so far resembled it, as to prevent it from being strange and unacceptable; but it differed very materially from it. The heathen supposed the human form, on these occasions, not to be perfect man, but a body animated by the Deity. It is not surprising, accordingly, that among the ancient heresies there should be this very view taken of the person of Christ. The Docetæ denied his human nature, and asserted him to be God only, in the likeness of man, or rather, a human frame, inhabited and animated, not by a human soul, but by the Æon only, which they called the Word.

Whether the notion that the same Deity might become more than one object of worship might have affected their reception of the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity.

Another popular view which they entertained, concerning the nature of a Deity, must not pass unnoticed. It is well known, that in the common creed of Greece, Diana, Hecate, and Luna, were held to be different objects of worship, and yet one and the same Deity. The Jupiter and Apollo of one place could not always be blended with the Jupiter and Apollo of another,[46] yet was there only one Jupiter and one Apollo. A striking illustration of this may be found in Xenophon's account of the retreat of the ten thousand. He had made a vow to Ephesian Diana of a portion of the spoils of war, and he fulfilled it, according to his own account, not by sending these gifts to Ephesus, but by consecrating a temple to Ephesian Diana in Greece.[47]

How far this notion may have operated, in enabling the Gentiles to understand, or in disposing them to listen to the Christian preachers, who taught that there was one God, and that he was to be worshipped in the person of God the Father, who created all the world, of God the Son, who redeemed all mankind, and of God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth all the elect people of God, the Christian reader may determine for himself. Certain it is, that no scriptural truth is more clearly taught than this. It is equally certain that, while for so many centuries, of all the Christian doctrines, that of a Trinity in Unity has been considered as the most obscure and mysterious; in the records and writings of the Apostles, there is not a trace of any scruple which it created—it seems to have called for no explanation, and is not even spoken of as a mystery.

Contempt which their preconceived notions were likely to inspire of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection and a future state.

That a general disbelief of a future state prevailed, has been already stated. The subject had indeed long ceased to furnish any serious argument for hope or fear. When Pericles is represented by the historian, as exhausting every topic of consolation, in his eloquent address to the surviving friends of those who had fallen in battle; he speaks of their glorious memory, and of the parents' hope that other sons may be born to fill their place and emulate their worth, but not one syllable is there of their future life and immortality.[48] Cicero acknowledges, that the Epistle of Sulpicius on the death of Tullia comprehended every argument for comfort which the case admitted; yet we search that Epistle in vain for the slightest allusion to the one topic, which would have been uppermost in the mind of a believer, professedly consoling a father for the loss of his daughter.[49] Even in the Roman Senate, Julius Cæsar once ventured

[46] Thus Herodotus, enumerating the privileges of the kings of Sparta, distinguishes the Priesthood of the Lacedæmonian Jupiter from that of the Heavenly Jupiter.—*Erato*, C. 56.

[47] Anab. Lib. V. C. 3.

[48] Thucyd. Lib. II. C. 35. *et seq.*

[49] Ciceronis Epist. Lib. IV. Ep. 5 and 6. "*Quod si etiam inferis sensus est,*" &c., is a mode of expression, which conveys more than a doubt, whether the dead were sensible of joy or sorrow. The introduction of the remark, too, without a single suggestion of Tullia's immortal destiny, proves, not merely that Sulpicius was himself a sceptic, but that he considered the mention of it as unfit for a serious argument. We may, in short,

to appeal to the *real* opinion of his audience, that a future state contained nothing either to hope for or to dread; and was seconded in the avowal by Cato.[50]

It was, therefore, nothing wonderful that St. Paul should be mocked by his Athenian audience for preaching Jesus and the resurrection. The doctrine seemed beneath their serious notice, and was despised for its apparent absurdity. And this, not merely because it was disbelieved, but because men's minds had never been accustomed to it, even in the fables of Elysium and Tartarus. A bodily resurrection was unheard of, the idea of man's identity in a future state was altogether new; and heathen records agree with the statement of the Bible, that it was Jesus Christ who brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Acts xvii. 32

II.—RELIGION OF THE JEWS.

In estimating the state of religion among the Jews at the period of the Advent of our Saviour, two points of inquiry must be kept distinct: the one, what their Law and Prophets were apparently designed to teach them; the other, what they actually did learn from these sources.[51] That the Jewish Scriptures were so interpreted as to render the promised Messiah unacceptable to the great body of the nation, is plain from a cursory perusal of the Gospels. It is equally plain that the Jewish Scriptures were calculated to produce a quite contrary effect. With reference, therefore, to this, and to other points, it will be necessary to consider both the Jewish dispensation in itself, and as it was received by the people at large, and by the various sects which existed among them.

Allegorical nature of the Jewish Religion.

In God's occasional communications with any people or individual of old, his messages were conveyed as much by signs and types as by words. Of a practice so well known, no example or illustration can be necessary. Agreeably to this method, we find the religion of the Jews deposited, partly in their Scriptures, partly in ceremonies and institutions, and the service required of them consisting even more in representation than in verbal expression. They sacrificed more than they prayed. Instead of a form of words annually addressed to Heaven on account of their deliverance from Egypt, the scene was annually represented by the ceremony of the Passover.

Its objects.

A religion so constituted would naturally contain a vast body of rites, many of them in themselves trivial and unmeaning, and deriving importance and significance only from being viewed as

use the same argument to disprove the belief of a future state among the Heathen who spoke of the immortality of the soul, that Cicero himself does to disprove the belief of the Stoics that pain was not an evil. See De Finibus, Lib. IV. 9; and the conclusion he draws there, from an *omission* in a letter from Panætius to Q. Tubero.

[50] Sallust. in Catilin. C. 51, 52.

[51] See Appendix [C.]

symbols. Had the ceremonial Law, indeed, been composed of rites and observances important or more than trivial in themselves, those who practised them would have been still more likely to regard them as valuable on their own account, and not for the further object to which they pointed. Considered thus, then, the ceremonial portion of the Law will appear as another mode of conveying the same instruction as its verbal precepts. It was unto each man "a sign upon his hand, and a memorial between his eyes, that the Lord's law might be in his mouth." Some of its ordinances, no doubt, had reference to the idolatrous practices of the neighbouring Gentiles, concerning which our information is too imperfect for us to estimate fully the fitness of those ordinances. Others, again, were obviously lessons of morality and piety. A third, and the most important class, were calculated to prepare the nation for a candid and ready admission of the Messiah's claims, and of the Christian revelation. One or more of these objects was probably intended in each rite, however trivial.

Exod. xiii. 9.

The minute directions, for instance, respecting the treatment of lepers. To the Jews these directions furnished a sort of histrionic sermon, displaying the foul nature of sin, its contagious character, the precautions requisite to enable the healthiest and strongest minds to escape its influence; lastly, its offensiveness to God, and the necessity of a mysterious cleansing and sanctification by blood. In all cases of legal defilement, purity was to be restored by the intervention of a high priest, by the offering of a sacrifice, and (whenever it was practicable) by the blood of a victim. The continual repetition of these scenes was like the continual reading of moral and religious lessons to the Jews, in a language agreeable to the habits of the most ancient times, and therefore impressive and intelligible. And if these rites did not actually convey a notion of the one great High Priest, who was to cleanse all mankind from moral defilement by the sacrifice of himself, yet they were calculated to habituate the Jews to that way of thinking, which should render the doctrine nothing strange and revolting, but, on the contrary, highly natural and acceptable.

Nevertheless, Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block; which must have been owing to some wrong bias, which their minds received from those who pretended to guide them in the interpretation of the Law and the Prophets.

Causes which led to their misinterpretation.

To explain the nature and origin of this bias, two passages of Jewish History must be brought under notice. The one is the intercourse between the Jews and the Gentiles, especially the Egyptians; the other is the rise of the traditional law into supreme authority.

Connexion with Egypt. Jer. xlii. xliii.

I. As early as the period of the Babylonian captivity some settlement of the Jews in Egypt appears to have been formed. At all events, from the foundation of Alexandria they began to be estab-

lished there in great numbers. The illustrious founder of that city allowed them a share of privileges in common with his Macedonian colonists, and the free exercise of their religion; and his liberal policy towards them was continued by his successors.[52] Increasing in numbers and importance, they at length obtained permission to build a temple for themselves in Egypt, in order to avoid the inconvenience attending the yearly resort of so many to Jerusalem.[53] This was a most important step. Weakening the ties of filial dependence by which the Jews of Egypt were bound to the holy city, it was the occasion of their becoming more devotedly attached to the place of their abode, and more liable to the mischievous effects produced on their faith by their connexion with it. It was in itself indeed a bold violation of their Law, which expressly directed that they should perform their temple worship at the one place only which the Lord had appointed. They now began to imbibe many of the absurd fancies of the heathen philosophy, so much cultivated at that time at Alexandria, and blended it in their view of their own sacred doctrines. Accustomed to contemplate a secondary meaning in their Law and Prophets, they too readily yielded to the seduction of the famous Platonic school of Alexandria, the aim of which was, by allegorical interpretation, so to adapt itself to every other system, as that all should appear consistent and the same—a method afterwards practised with the like success on Christianity. This false wisdom soon spreading from Egypt to Judæa, the Jewish creed, both at home and abroad, became not a little changed and distorted by the artificial light thus thrown on it.[54]

Deut. xii.

Platonic School.

As the period of the Advent drew nigh, the rest also of the Gentile world became so interspersed with Jews, as to justify almost a literal acceptation of St. James's assertion, that Moses had in every city them that preached him. Yet it does not appear that the Jewish creed was generally affected by this varied intercourse. Egypt was the channel, at least, through which any foreign impression was conveyed. There was a fatality in the connexion of the Jews with Egypt, and when it ceased to be a scourge, it became a snare to them.

Acts xv 21.

At the same time, it must not be supposed that the intercourse between the Jews and Gentiles was productive of unmixed mischief to the former.[55] Part, indeed, of the scheme of Providence, in

[52] Josephi Ant. Jud. Lib. XI. C. 8, and Lib. XII. C. 1.

[53] Ejusdem, Lib. XIII. C. 3.

[54] See Bruckeri Historia Critica Philosophiæ, Tome II. pp. 690 and 697.

[55] Warburton has suggested that the Jews were cured of idolatry from the period of the Babylonish captivity, not so much by the severity of the punishment which they had undergone, as by *their subsequent acquaintance with the Greek philosophy*. Their previous religious knowledge enabled them, he observes, to derive from the heathen writings an advantage of which the heathen themselves were incapable. The wiser and better sort of Gentiles learned to despise indeed the authority of their popular superstitions, but they had no means of going beyond this scepticism and infidelity. The Jews learned from the same sources

Probable reasons for the permission of this intercourse with the Gentiles.

extending that intercourse so greatly at that precise period, might have been to afford the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, an opportunity of acquiring more preparatory light than either enjoyed, for the glorious scene which was approaching. And although this opportunity was not generally embraced by either, there were, doubtless, many, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles, on whom it was not lost; many among the Jews, such as Simeon and Anna; many among the Gentiles, such as the good Centurion and Cornelius. From this intercourse the Gentiles might have derived clearer notions of the character of that universal Lord, who was expected to arrive out of the East, if, indeed, the expectation were not wholly derived from that source. On the other hand, the Jews might have been roused to search their Scriptures for the true account of certain matters on which the Gentiles speculated largely, and which were so imperfectly revealed to the Jews, as to be likely to be unnoticed without some call for investigation—as, for instance, the doctrine of a future state. How much the publication of the Gospel was facilitated by the establishment of synagogues in every great city is obvious; and this, too, was not an exclusive benefit to the Gentiles, for the Jew abroad was likely to be more free and fearless in submitting his mind to the humiliating truths which were to be disclosed, inasmuch as he was removed from the chief seat of national prejudice, and was unawed by the presence of that authority which upheld it.

Traditional Law.

II. Of the true origin of the traditional Law there is no certain account, which is remarkable, considering that it constituted the main line of separation between the contending sects. According to its advocates, it was delivered by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, together with the written Law, and was therefore asserted to be of equal authority with it. Their opponents contented themselves with refusing assent to this statement, without, however, either denying the antiquity of these traditions, or assigning them any specific source or date.[56]

Its probable origin.

It is probable, from this uncertainty, as well as from the character of the traditions themselves, (for, if they have been faithfully recorded in the Talmuds, they are little more than a tissue of minute rules superadded to those in Scripture concerning the observance of the ritual law,) that they were the gradual accumulation of many centuries. Originally, perhaps, mere directions for determining matters left indeterminate in Scripture, they acquired from usage and habitual compliance an equal authority with the law itself.[57]

Its effects.

Be it as it may, the enlargement of the ritual law suited well with that bias of mind in the nation at large, which in those latter days

to view the heathen worship in its true light; but this immediately confirmed them in their own faith, the contrasted character of which left them no room to pause in general scepticism. See Divine Legation, Book V. Sect. 2.

[56] Josephi Antiq. Jud., Lib. XIII. C. 10.

[57] See Prideaux's Connexion, Part I. B. V., where the source of these traditions is assigned to the age of Ezra and the return from the Captivity.

was more fully displayed in the character of the Pharisee—a tendency, namely, to forget the twofold nature of the Law, and to consider that as valuable on its own account, which there was every reason to believe was only valuable from its reference to some other object, even although that object might not always have been clear and distinctly to be seen. Going then on the principle, that the works of the Law were to be regarded as an ultimate and independent object, that its intent was to make the comers thereunto perfect, not to shadow out the good things appointed for that purpose, the traditionist thought, consistently enough, that by adding rite to rite, and rule to rule, he should enlarge the sphere of meritorious conduct. And if the written Law contained enough for justification, the superadded value of the works of the unwritten Law would be more than the purchase of Divine reward.

The Pharisees.

This was the righteousness of the Pharisees, the most considerable sect at the period of the Advent. They were the class into which the learned naturally fell, and being reverenced for their Scriptural erudition, and for the strictness of their lives, the great body of the people was content to subscribe to their doctrines, and to adopt their views of Scripture, without aspiring to be Pharisees in holiness any more than in learning. On them the vulgar gazed, as on men whose righteous attainments went so far beyond what was needful, as to be admirable rather than good, and beheld them in their long fastings, their reiterated prayers, and their profound meditations, advancing ever, as it seemed, from superior to supreme sanctity.[58] It will be readily conceived, that to such men the doctrine of good works being insufficient and ineffectual for salvation, and of the necessity of atonement for the sins of all, must have been light too distressing for them to open their eyes upon without a painful effort; and that they were likely for the most part to be obstinately blind to all evidence. And what must have been the result on the people who were under their guidance? The Pharisees bade them, indeed, conform to the Law, and especially to the ceremonial Law, but they took away the key of knowledge, that unlocked its mysterious meaning, or else, substituted for its true secondary meaning, something that was fanciful and foreign. They enjoined obedience to the Divine precepts, even to the letter of the commandment; but whenever obedience proved hard or inconvenient, some one of the numerous traditions (the Divine source and authority of which they maintained) was readily found to make the case an exception.

[58] Goodwin, in his "Moses and Aaron," gives a quaint and graphic description of the varieties of the Pharisaical character, as represented in the Talmuds. Among them he enumerates

'*Pharisæus truncatus*, so called, as if he had no feet, because he would scarce lift them from the ground when he walked, to cause the greater opinion of his meditation.

"*Pharisæus mortarius*, so called, because he wore a hat in manner of a deep mortar, such as they use to bray spice in, insomuch that he could not look upward, nor of either side; only downward on the ground, and forward, or forthright."—Lib. I. C. X.

The Sadducees.

It might have been expected, that the sect which professedly stood forth to oppose the corruptions of the Pharisees would have done something towards bringing the Jews back to a purer view of their Scriptures. But this was very far from being the case. The sect alluded to—that of the Sadducees—is the only other (religious sect at least) noticed in the New Testament. These pseudo-reformers rejected, indeed, the traditions of the Pharisees, but they continued to look as blindly as their opponents on the genuine Scriptures; and they have even been charged with denying the authority of all except those written by Moses.[59] This, it must be confessed, does not appear probable; at least such a tenet would seem inconsistent with the office of the high priesthood, from which it is certain that they were not excluded.[60] Nor, again, is it likely that, in their controversy with the Pharisees, the latter would have appealed to the Prophets, (as appears to have been the case,[61]) unless the Prophets had been acknowledged as authority by both. The Sadducees were in truth freethinkers and scoffers; a society which was the receptacle of all who were willing or able to free themselves from the restraints of religion. The Sadducee was the rich sensualist, and the man of the world; and his tenets were, doubtless, pliable enough not to interfere with his promotion to the highest office in the Jewish Church.

It is observable, that one of the distinguishing features of a sect so characterised, should be the assertion that man's good and evil destiny depends entirely on his own exertions. Whilst the Pharisee contended for a fated course of events, so contrived however as to be compatible with a free agency in man, the Sadducee maintained that he was left altogether to himself, to work out his own happiness or misery.[62] And yet (notwithstanding his belief in those Scriptures which represented reward as attached to virtue, and punishment to vice,) he lived the life which, *à priori*, would be assigned to the fatalist. So requisite does it seem, from every experimental view of human conduct, that other motives to the practice of virtue should be added to the hope of reward, and the fear of punishment.

The doctrine of the Sadducees took its rise, it is said, from a refinement which their founder, Sadoc, made on the teaching of his master, Antigonus Sochæus. The latter had been wont to dwell on the duty of serving God, not like a slave with a view to reward and punishment, but from disinterested motives.[63] Upon this Sadoc built his theory, that no reward or punishment would be distributed in a future state. From this point it was a very easy step to the

[59] Origen. con. Celsum, Lib. I. C. 49. Tertullian asserts the same.

[60] Acts v. 17, and Josephi Antiq. Lib. XIII. C. 10.

[61] See Basnage, Hist. L. II. C. 6, and Bruckeri Hist. Crit. Phil. Tome II. 722.

[62] Josephi Antiq. Jud. Lib. XIII. C. 5.

[63] The Pharisees themselves seem to have been divided on this question; hence the distinction made in the Talmuds between *Pharisæus ex amore*, and *Pharisæus ex timore*.

denial of man's immortality, and that was as easily followed up with a denial of the existence of angels and of spirits.[64]

The Essenes.

Where and when the fraternity of the Essenes was first formed is not clearly made out. Most probably they owed their origin to Egypt, where the Jewish refugees who fled for security after the murder of Gedaliah, were compelled, upon the captivity of the greater part of their body, to lead a recluse life, out of which this monkish institution might have grown.[65] In direct contrast with the Sadducees, they renounced the pomp and pleasures, and the very conveniences of life, and, retiring to caves and deserts, formed so distinct a community, as to withdraw themselves even from the customary attendance on the temple, essential as this was deemed to every true Israelite. Another point in which they stood opposed to the Sadducees, as to their speculative tenets, is, that they were unqualified fatalists.[66]

Their secession from the great body of the nation seems a good reason why they should not be noticed in the Gospel narratives of our Lord's ministry. They had little better claim, indeed, to be regarded as a portion of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to which he confined his labours, than the Samaritans. It is not improbable, however, that they might have formed part of the hearers of John the Baptist, whose rude mode of life, and wanderings in the desert, were likely to attract some of them into the class of his disciples, and to make the whole body early acquainted with the offer of salvation through Christ.

John the Baptist.

The mention of this distinguished forerunner of the Messiah suggests the propriety of some brief notice of the probable effect of his preaching, in correcting those false views which, agreeably to the foregoing remarks and statements, must have prevailed amongst the Jews. What we gather from the New Testament is, that he was employed in calling on men to repent, and in establishing clearer notions of Christ's approaching kingdom than were generally entertained. Thus his admonition to "bring forth *fruits* meet for repentance," seems to have been addressed to the prevailing error, that an outward observance of religion was sufficient. By "the axe laid to the root of the tree," he intimated, that the Jewish dispensation was not, as men fondly thought, to be perpetual, but was even now hastening to its fall. And lastly, his assertion that "God was able, out of the stones of the desert, to raise up children unto Abraham," seems to point to the adoption of the Gentiles into the covenant. Add to this, that his peculiar office being to prepare the

Matt. iii. 8; Luke iii. 8.

Matt. iii. 10; Luke iii. 9.

Matt. iii 9; Luke iii. 8.

[64] Basnage, Liv. II. C. 6, and Bruckeri Hist. Crit. Phil. Tome II. p. 716.

[65] See Brucker, Lib. C. p. 762. Celibacy was enjoined upon the greater part, but not upon the whole body of the Essenes; for even this small community had its subdivisions, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, its gradations of ascetic life. A very interesting sketch of their character and habits is given in "The Pilgrimage of Helon."

[66] Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XIII. C. 5, and Lib. XVIII. C. 1, secund. edit. Hudsoni.

way of the Lord, it is probable that he might also have taught the application of the prophecies to a spiritual, not a temporal, Saviour.

Necessity of his mission.

The need of some divine messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, is indeed manifest from the foregoing sketch of the state of religion as it then existed among the Jews. Such a messenger had been useful, even supposing the Jews to have employed their dispensation aright, for it was in itself of a nature to leave their minds doubtful, and to render error, on certain points relating to the Messiah, natural and excusable. With a view to these points, then, the coming of John would have been, at all events, acceptable. But he is described as coming in the spirit of Elias, who was to *restore* all things. His ministry, then, was chiefly a merciful provision, to supply (as far as was consistent with the general scheme of Providence) the deficiencies of that preparation which the Jews had failed to derive from their Law and Prophets. He came *to restore the appearance of the law,*—that mouldering and defaced image, which had been given them, to the intent that the original might be recognised when it appeared amongst men.[67]

The first object which the Jews were naturally led from their Scriptures to look for in the dawn of the Sun of Righteousness, was the coming of a messenger, such as John the Baptist. But that messenger had been announced under the title of Elijah the prophet. Hence, the mistake to which they obstinately adhered, that "Elias must first come,"—a mistake in itself natural enough, but one which the actual arrival of the messenger so strongly characterised as the Baptist was, ought to have been sufficient to remove, even before the scene was more fully opened by our Lord himself. That the claims of John should be left liable to misapprehension, or rather that they should require more than a careless, and much more than an uncandid consideration, in order to be recognised, is only in consistency with the usual tenor of God's dealing with mankind. And it may be further observed, that while it was necessary that men should know who Christ really was, in order that the beneficial effects of his ministry might be felt, this was a point not necessary to the reaping of the fruits of the Baptist's mission.

Matt. xvii. 10, Mark ix. 11.

Expectation of a temporal Saviour.

Their recognition of the Messiah himself would, of course, depend on their interpretation of their Scriptures, together with whatever notions they might have elsewhere derived concerning him. Of the general impression so produced, the most prominent feature, and that which operated most strongly to blind them to all his mighty works, was the opinion that he was to be a temporal Saviour. This

[67] It is to be observed, that the prophetic promise of Elijah's coming immediately follows the injunction to "remember the law of Moses."

"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and the judgments.

"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."—Mal. iv. 4, 5.

It is necessary to consider these two verses as connected, in order to understand why Elijah was expected as *the restorer.*

arose, not merely from a speculative view of the Scriptures relating to him, but much more from the habit of mind wrought into them by living under a dispensation, the sanctions of which were wholly temporal. This tone of feeling was vastly increased by the severe chastisements which the nation had endured from the Babylonian captivity down to their then degraded condition, as a distant tributary of Rome. These circumstances must be viewed as falling in with the natural propensity of human hope towards "the things which are seen," in order to account for that monstrous blindness which the Jews evinced towards those passages of their Scriptures, which they acknowledged to be predictive of Christ, and which yet represented him under circumstances wholly inconsistent with temporal greatness in himself, or with temporal deliverance to be wrought for his people.

The apostles not free from this prejudice.

So strong was this prejudice, that the apostles themselves could not, until after the resurrection, understand how his death was consistent with his character as the Messiah. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," was the tone of misgiving in which they spoke; and it is no unreasonable conjecture, that when Judas betrayed him to death, it was under an impression that he would be miraculously delivered from his enemies.[68] Certain it is, that not only during his life did Peter, James, and John question one with another, what the rising from the dead should mean, but on the visit to the holy sepulchre, the Evangelist expressly states, that "as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead;" and accordingly it was the point which appears to have required more particular explanation from him in the last interview, immediately before his ascension. "Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." So that Christ crucified was as strictly a stumbling-block to the Jews, as it appears to have been foolishness to the Greeks.

Luke xxiv. 21.

Mark ix. 10.

John xx. 9.

Luke xxiv. 45, 46.

Prejudice against the call of the Gentiles accounted for.

That they should expect the Gentiles to be excluded from the immediate benefits of the Messiah's reign, is another prejudice, the origin of which must be sought for, not merely in their mode of interpreting Scripture, but in the notions naturally imbibed by living under a theocracy. God had hitherto dealt with them, not merely as a portion of the general human race, but as his peculiar people. Now, being the only people on earth who worshipped Jehovah at all, they had never learned to think of him distinctly as the God of all mankind, and also as the God of Israel. These two views of him became inseparably blended in their minds. They knew indeed that all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and they doubtless understood that it was to be a common blessing with that which was

[68] See Thruston's "Night of Treason," p. 33.

reserved for themselves; but agreeably to the above-mentioned mode of thinking, it seemed a requisite step to that object, that the nations of the earth should be incorporated with themselves by conquest, that Jerusalem should be the seat of empire, and the Messiah the universal and eternal monarch. With this prejudice, the metaphorical images emblematic of his spiritual reign were regarded as literal descriptions; and thus finally, when baffled in their attempts to render all the prophetic picture conformable to this view, they boldly adopted the suggestion that two Messiahs might be intended, the one a lowly sufferer, the other a triumphant conqueror.[69]

When therefore he did appear, even those whom his miracles convinced, only looked on in dim suspense for the development of the mysterious scheme, still supposing that the preparatory step would be his assumption of temporal power. On the other hand, the bitterness with which his adversaries caught his hints respecting the call of the Gentiles, was not, if we consider this prejudice aright, mere national selfishness. They doubtless considered the threatened transfer of God's kingdom as a transfer of his peculiar government to some other separate nation. Nay, it may be doubted whether their dark policy in delivering him over to the Roman governor, charged with treason, might not have arisen from this suspicion, that he was meditating a transfer of the temporal kingdom of God from them to the Romans, and intending (if indeed he were the Messiah) to assume with them his reign.[70] The design is at least artful enough to be probable; for the object would be, to render the Romans unfit for the intended favour, if they failed in their attempts to crucify him, and if they succeeded, their success would be a surety that he was not the Messiah. And an accidental circumstance not a little inflamed this prejudice against the extension of the promised blessing. This was the rise of the Hellenistic faction in Egypt. Party spirit was roused, and Jews at home and abroad burned with zeal for Jerusalem, Judæa, and whatever savoured of Judaism.[71]

Party spirit strong among the Jews.

Why they demanded a sign of Christ.

What was likely, too, to confirm the Jews in adhering to their erroneous view of the Messiah, was a notion several times alluded to in the Gospels. Daniel had described him, in the metaphorical phrase of prophecy, as "coming in the clouds of heaven."[72] This

[69] Basnage. Liv. IV. C. 25, Sect. 10. Prideaux's Connex. p. ii. B. VIII.; Pocock's Commentary on Malachi; and Calmet's Dict. under the word *Messiah.*

[70] When he was presented with a Roman coin, and questioned respecting Cæsar, and Cæsar's rights, it might have been with a design to tempt or try him on this point. (Matt. xxii. 17.) The circumstance was alluded to in his accusation before Pilate. "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, *saying that he himself is Christ a King.*" (Luke xxiii. 2.)

[71] Basnage, Lib. VI. C. 5, Sect. 14.

[72] Daniel vii. 13. From our Saviour's application of this prophecy, it is generally understood to point to the destruction of Jerusalem. (See Matt. xxiv. 30; Mark xiii. 26; Luke xxi. 27.) It may be doubted, however, whether we are correct in assigning it to that event, so as to make it mean the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, in order to take vengeance on the unbelieving city. The destruction of Jerusalem was the main *sign*, that the Son of man's new kingdom was now completely founded, because the existence of the Jewish

they understood literally, and under the impression that if Jesus were indeed the Messiah, he would, in fulfilment of this prophecy, exhibit himself visibly descending from the skies; they were slow to assent to the testimony of any other miracles, but continually and perseveringly demanded of him "the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Matt. xii. 38, and xvi. 1; Mark viii 11; Luke xi. 16.

In reference to this point of error, again, it may be suggested, that the Jews were justified in adhering to the literal and more obvious meaning of their prophecies. But this is not the case. For, as was before observed, the form of Divine communication to them was not usually literal, but conveyed in types, symbols, and metaphors. With them, therefore, a secondary meaning in a prophecy was more natural than the primary.[73] It should be observed, too, that such a method seems in strict unison with the general character of the Mosaic dispensation, which was not so much a revelation, as a deposit of truths to be revealed; the form in which these truths were deposited being calculated rather to mould men's minds for their reception, than positively to teach them. It was the Gospel which was to bring them to light.

The doctrine of a divine Incarnation familiar to the Jews.

That, with these perverse views, the Jewish people at large should be unfavourably disposed towards the claim of Jesus to be the Christ, is what might be expected. That which to us might seem most startling, most to demand doubt and hesitation, in the character of a being so wonderful, and a doctrine so spiritual, was to them possibly no ground of scruple or surprise. That God manifested himself to mankind by his Spirit, they knew from the character of their prophets, and from the record of the creation. That he should also manifest himself in the flesh, this could not have been strange or unexpected. Their familiarity with the term Immanuel,[74] and their acquaintance with the early mode of Divine intercourse through those mysterious messengers, who at sundry times conversed with the patriarchs, must have rendered the doctrine of the Incarnation familiar and intelligible. In Jesus the assertion of this was accounted blasphemy, not because of the doctrine, but because they did not receive him as the Messiah. Gen. xviii. xix. xxxii. Matt. xxvi. 65; Mark xiv. 64; Luke xxii. 71.

temple and of the Jewish polity was inconsistent with that event; and it was the establishment of this new theocracy which was expressed agreeably to the prophetic language respecting change of government, by the phrase of the new Lord coming in the clouds of heaven. The abolition of the temple service would have been the appropriate *sign* of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, supposing the Jews, instead of rejecting him, to have welcomed him, and not to have incurred the heavy chastisement which befel them.

[73] For this, among other reasons, our Lord might have chosen to convey his instruction to them in parables and allusions. By conforming his plan of teaching thus far to the spirit of the Jewish Scriptures, he reminded them of the true character of those Scriptures, which were so composed, that the indocile and uncandid "seeing might not see, and hearing might not understand."—Luke viii. 10.

[74] To the Christian, the prophetical application of the term Immanuel to Christ seems to be (unless the mind be greatly prejudiced) an unanswerable proof of his Divine nature. For if the Messiah was to be Immanuel, he could be so only in two ways, either as being so named, or as being what that name signified, *i.e.* "God with us." He was not called Immanuel by name, and therefore he was "God with us."

The doctrine of the Atonement familiar to the Jews:

So also with regard to the Atonement. It was obviously a notion to which their minds were long habituated. And yet it is not unlikely that the same principle which afterwards led them to separate the suffering from the triumphant Messiah, might have blinded them to the union of the victim and the priest in one person; and have led them to consider him whose soul was to be an offering for sin, as distinct from him who was to make intercession for the trangressors. One part of this doctrine, too, could not but be unacceptable to the Pharisaical party, namely, that the atonement was *one, once made, for the sins of all.* That all, even the righteous, should require this atonement, was of itself mortifying and revolting to the self-approving Pharisee; but that all the rites and forms which typified or alluded to this act should be pronounced henceforth null and void, deprived them of every pretence of accumulating merit by the laborious observance of them, and was perhaps to them the hardest obstacle which they had to overcome.

Isaiah liii. 10, 12.

And that of a future state.

That the doctrine of a future state was familiar to the Jews at the period of the Advent admits of no question. It is well known to have been one of the points of controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and as the former gave the tone of opinion and faith to the people, their belief in a future state may be fairly ascribed to the nation at large. The doctrine had been gradually developed by their prophets, together with that of the Messiah's spiritual reign, of which indeed it was a necessary adjunct. Those then among the Jews, who so understood their Scriptures, as to admit the spiritual application of these latter prophecies, may be said to have seen their way far into this great secret of revelation. But the case was somewhat different with the rest, and these we know formed an exceeding great majority. For it is obvious, that to expect a temporal authority to be established, and a temporal government to be conducted, by means of eternal rewards and punishments, is incongruous and absurd; and under such a confused and disjointed view, not only did those labour who rejected Jesus, but many of those who (however much convinced that he was the Messiah) were yet so encumbered with their national prejudices, as to continue to expect from him the assumption of temporal power. So closely did the habits of the Mosaic dispensation adhere to those who had lived under it, and so great pains did it require to clear away the old incrustation, as it were, of the Law, with which Christianity had been plastered up and concealed, until it was safe to bring it forth into the light. Of all its glorious features which were then made manifest, life and immortality were the chief.

III.—RELIGION OF THE SAMARITANS.

ALTHOUGH the Samaritans claimed for themselves all the privileges of the Mosaic covenant, yet our Saviour in his first mission of the apostles distinguishes these from "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and, it may be added, from the Gentiles also. Accordingly, if we look to the accounts which are given of their origin and of the nature of their faith, we shall find religion amongst them assuming a somewhat different character from that under which it has appeared, either in the Jewish or in the Gentile world. With the Jews it was revelation neglected, with the Gentiles it was revelation perverted, with the Samaritans it was revelation corrupted.

Matt. x 6, and xv. 24.

Their origin and the history of their faith is this.[75] When the king of Assyria carried away the ten tribes into captivity, he repeopled Samaria with colonists drawn from various parts of his dominions. The new settlement becoming infested by wild beasts, the calamity was attributed to the wrath of the neglected God of Israel; and accordingly, on the application of the colonists, one of the captive priests was sent from Assyria "to teach them how to fear the Lord." Thus was the knowledge of Jehovah introduced among them, although, in the first instance at least, they could only have regarded him as the tutelary deity of the land, whom it was incumbent on them to associate with the former objects of their worship. Nor is it likely that their views would be greatly corrected or improved by the continual accession of Jewish refugees to their community; these being for the most part criminals, outcasts, the very refuse of the people.[76]

History of their faith.

Under all these disadvantages, the true faith must nevertheless have been gaining ground amongst them, for we find them at a subsequent period anxious to become incorporated with the Jews, so as to form one people and one Church. Sanballat their governor sought to bring this about, by giving his daughter in marriage to Manasses, brother to Jaddus the Jewish high priest. But the Jews could not brook the union. Manasses was forced into banishment, and with him went a numerous train of adherents into Samaria. The benefit which must have accrued to the Samaritan religion from this event is obvious. The immediate result was the erection of an independent temple on Mount Gerizim, and the more orderly observance of that which they maintained to be the pure Mosaic law; because on the writings of Moses alone did they found their faith and their practice.[77]

Temple on Mount Gerizim.

And certainly, whatever were the deficiencies or the mistakes of the Samaritan creed, to them, and not to the Jews, we know the Messiah vouchsafed, in express terms, to declare who he was. Both

Christ's manifestation of himself to them.

[75] 2 Kings xvii. Joseph. Antiq. Lib. IX. Cap. ultim.
[76] Josephi Ant. Lib. XI. C. 8, in fin.
[77] Ibid. C. 7, 8.

Jews and Samaritans were anxiously expecting him; but it is plain, that the expectation of the Samaritans was widely different from that of the Jews; for when the inhabitants of Sychar thronged forth to gaze on him who was reported as fulfilling the prophetic marks of the Christ, they were neither surprised nor offended, at meeting with no greater personage than a lowly traveller, seated beside Jacob's well, and asking for a draught of water. The grounds of this difference form the most interesting point of the inquiry concerning the religion of the Samaritans; and to the superior clearness and correctness of their notions it was doubtless owing, that they were favoured with this more explicit avowal of himself by the Messiah, and were otherwise noticed by him in the course of his ministry.

Their expectation of the Messiah distinct from that of the Jews.

Amongst the heresies of the Samaritans was their rejection of all the Scriptures save the Pentateuch,[78] so that if their expectation was founded solely on the Scripture prophecies, to the Pentateuch we must look for the ground-work of their faith. Now, whoever will run through these early promises of a Saviour, will perceive that the most prominent feature in them, as far as regards the objects of the blessing, is, that all the nations of the earth shall be partakers of it.[79] It was the extension of the blessing then to all nations which formed the essential feature in their expectation, as distinguished from that of the Jews. Of spurious descent, and having now failed to identify their case with that of their rivals, they had not like them any prejudices to obstruct the ready admission of this great truth. Indeed, their unsuccessful rivalry with the Jews, might be supposed to have rendered them more sharp-sighted, in eliciting what to them was a consolatory view of the prophecies.

Reasons for Christ's avowal.

Now this being the point, which beyond all others formed the greatest obstacle to the reception of the Messiah by his own people, it is not to be wondered at, that with a view to this the Samaritans should receive some particular notice from our Lord.

Thus much on the supposition, that the Samaritan expectation was derived solely from the Jewish Scriptures. But if (as has been stated to be the opinion of some) the general expectation of the heathen world had some origin independent of this, it is but natural to conjecture further, that those who were by descent almost altogether heathen, would not have been excluded from these sources of traditionary prophecy enjoyed by the rest of the Gentiles; and that their knowledge of these might have helped them to a clearer exposition of the Jewish record than the Jews themselves generally adopted.

[78] See Appendix [D.]
[79] See especially Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.

PART I.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST.

THE period which will pass under review in the following inquiry, embraces the three great stages in the establishment of Christianity. In the first, it was taught by our Saviour himself on earth; in the second, it was intrusted to the ministry of men divinely inspired and extraordinarily assisted; in the last, it was permanently placed in the hands of governors and teachers neither divinely inspired nor extraordinarily assisted.

Omissions in Christ's Ministry explained.

There are several remarkable omissions in our Lord's personal ministry, such as that he never baptized, although baptism was the rite of admission into his religion; that he did not preach to the Gentiles, although the most distinguishing feature of the new dispensation was its extension to all mankind; that he established no church during his abode on earth, and left no written laws behind him: all which seem to indicate, (what the Gospel account of him more expressly declares,) that he came to be the *subject* of Christianity more than the *author* of it. In the former view, he appears as God manifested in the flesh, and in that character accomplishing our redemption by his mysterious sufferings and death. In the latter, he appears as the teacher of mankind, instructing them in the method whereby they might attain to the Divine favour thus made accessible to all. His ministry so considered may be conveniently classed under the following heads:—

I. His ordinary Life, considered in the light of an Example.
II. His Teaching.
III. His Miracles.
IV. His Institutions.
V. His Prophecies.

This view will not include a detailed account of the events of his life, obviously because the Bible is in the hands of all. A familiarity with them is presumed, and on this presumption they will be introduced or alluded to, not in the way of narrative, but as they fall under the several divisions into which the subject has been arranged.[1]

[1] In the mode of considering Christ's Ministry which has been here adopted, the question of its duration, and also the chronological arrangement of its several

I.—EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

THE importance of example and precept united in the same person is obvious, and consists in the learner being at once impressed with a conviction that the teacher is sincere and his precept practicable, and being furnished with a pattern to excite and guide him in the practice of it. If, added to this, the same person be moreover the source of that object, on account of which the rules enjoined are valuable, the combined effect is of course considerably heightened.

Want of an example in the Mosaic dispensation

That the Divine commandments, as delivered to mankind before the incarnation of the Son of God, laboured under a disadvantage, arising from the want of such an example, cannot be questioned. The disciple of the old dispensation, was circumstanced like the tyro, who has to learn an art from written rules, for want of a master to practise under. To obviate this disadvantage, it was necessary that the commands should be more numerous, more minute and specific, and more literally enforced. Still, in some points, it would seem impossible, that any mode of instruction should produce a similar effect, to that which has resulted from the great Christian mystery. He, for instance, whom we have never seen nor conceived in thought, cannot become an object of the affections, in the same manner as he with whom we are familiar. The command to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our strength, could never effect the same purpose, as God manifested in the flesh, so as to become the natural object of sympathy, of love, and of gratitude.

On this principle doubtless it is, that the resurrection of Christ

parts, are necessarily excluded. On the former point, namely, the period which it embraced, there is now perhaps little difference of opinion, at least controversy has been long silent on the subject. But few questions historical or doctrinal have been more frequently renewed from the earliest period of the church. It is quite marvellous, too, to find the immense difference of time ascribed to our Lord's Ministry among those who differed concerning the point in the period nearest the source of information. Tertullian * and Origen† have been supposed to fix it, the one within the compass of a year, the other a little beyond it; whilst Irenæus seems to assert a period of twenty years. The subject has been discussed by Bp. Marsh in his notes to Michaelis with his usual learning and judgment. See Vol. III. C. II. Sect. 7, note.

* Adv. Judæos, C. 8.
† Περὶ ἀρχῶν, Lib. IV. C. 5.

Bp. Kaye, in his Eccl. Hist. p. 158, attributes Tertullian's statement to a mistake of the year in which Christ was revealed, for the year in which he suffered. See also Benson's Chronology of our Saviour's Life, C. VII. page 241.

The arrangement of the several portions of Christ's Ministry by Archbishop Newcome in his Harmony, is perhaps as probable as can be suggested. The events of the Resurrection are those to the right disposition of which the most importance attaches, and it is on this part of the subject that most difficulty is likely to be felt. West on the Resurrection is too popular a book to require any reference to be made to it, as containing the ablest solution of the apparent inconsistencies which the Gospel narrative presents, but like Dr. Less's work on the Authenticity of the Scriptures, it derives a value from one circumstance, which cannot be too often brought into notice; it was the result of real doubt and scepticism.

is so much insisted on as an earnest of our own resurrection. Not that the same truth would have admitted of a doubt, if only a declaration of it had been made by our Lord or the Holy Spirit; nor, again, that other proofs of his ability to raise us would not have sufficed; but it was a sample of the general resurrection, "the first-fruits of them that slept;" and a truth so experimentally proved, differs as much in its effect on the belief and feelings, as mere precept differs from example, or rather as the effect of precept, disjoined from the example of him on whose authority it rests, differs from the effect of precept, example, and authority, united in the same person.

Advantage of Christianity in this point illustrated.

1 Cor. xv. 26.

For this end also the chastisement of our sins may have been exhibited in the person of a suffering Redeemer. For it is evident, that (for aught we know) the redemption of mankind might have been effected, and the scene neither exhibited nor revealed to men. As it is, we feel the force of St. Paul's appeal, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Rom. viii. 32.

Jesus Christ is set forth by the sacred writers as the perfect pattern of Christian duty. By which we must understand, not that he fulfilled all the duties which a Christian life may embrace, but all which were within his sphere of action. It is perfection in the *mode*, rather than in the extent which it embraces. It will nevertheless be found, on a very little reflection, to be extensive enough to furnish a model for the chief part of every man's life, and to be applicable in many points, which would appear at first to lie beyond its compass. Thus, as a worker of miracles, his example cannot indeed be literally imitated, but it may still be adapted to the case of all. The same benevolence which was evinced in the exercise of Divine means by him, may be testified in our behaviour, by the use of human means conducive to the same purpose. We cannot, indeed, redeem a world by the sacrifice of our lives, but many sacrifices and personal denials there are which conduce to the welfare of others, and in making these we shall be acting like our great example. We cannot save men's souls, but we may help them into the way of salvation; and although we have no power to ascend to heaven by any efforts of our own, by looking stedfastly on Him who has gone before us, we may kindle that hope, and that faith, whereby we shall ascend to heaven like Him.

Nature of Christ's example.

Again, there are relations of domestic and public life out of which duties arise, such as the Saviour cannot be literally said to have fulfilled, because he stood not in those relations, and had no opportunity of exemplifying the practice of the duties. We cannot contemplate him as a father and master of a household, but we see him in the bosom of his apostolic family,—those whom, as if with this design, he calls his mother and his brethren; and what example could more forcibly recommend the observance of family prayer, for

Matt. xii. 49.

Matt. xxvi. 26; Luke vi. 12; Luke ix. 28; Matt. vi. 9.

instance, than that which he has so exhibited, by adding to his solitary devotions, and to his attendance on the public service of the synagogue, the custom of praying in private with his disciples?

If we consider the sphere of life in which our Lord moved, it will be seen that, although his example thus became applicable to many cases strictly beyond it, yet it was more particularly suited to the exercise of those moral duties which are peculiar to the Christian scheme, *viz.* humility and forgiveness of injuries. The propriety and advantage of this is obvious. To the heathen moralist these qualities, considered as virtues, were as new as the doctrines of the Atonement and the Resurrection. To the Jew, the latter at least was equally so; and both required that the practice of them should be recommended by a life such as the Saviour led, in which his condescension in dwelling amongst us was more apparent from his poverty and lowliness, than if he had been numbered with the rich and powerful; whilst his every act of mercy, and his every word of exhortation to the Jews, was a return of good for evil. The closing scene of his ministry was only a more prominent display of those Gospel virtues exemplified in the whole course of it. He submitted voluntarily to a death appropriated to the meanest criminals, and he died praying for his enemies.

II.—HIS TEACHING.

His teaching not Philosophical:

As to his mode of teaching, it was not systematic; and in this his example was imitated by the apostles. The language and form in which it was delivered was unphilosophical; that is, instead of employing terms of science, he formed his expressions from passing occurrences, and whatever objects happened to be present to his hearers at the time of his addressing them. Or else he spoke in parables, or made use of that ancient symbolical language so often adopted by the Jewish prophets, as, when he washed his disciples' feet, and set a child in the midst of them.

John xiii. 5; Matt. xviii. 2.

Importance of remembering this fact:

Whatever be assigned as the probable motive which occasioned our Lord to choose this unphilosophical and unsystematic mode of instruction, it is highly important that the fact should be clearly kept in view by the Christian who searches the New Testament for the great doctrines of Christianity. Without doing so, he cannot fail to be surprised, and somewhat confounded, at finding these doctrines, neither arranged in order, nor often directly asserted, but lying in detached portions, each difficult perhaps to be found entire, but easily produced by combining one passage with another.

Probable Reasons for it.

As by this method it often happens, that one portion of the doctrine sought for will be found in the Old Testament, another in the New, the connexion and unity of the two dispensations, of which they are the several records, become the more apparent, and this might have been one end contemplated by our Lord in adopting it.

It entailed on the disciple of the Gospel the necessity of searching the earlier Scriptures for the words of eternal life.

A further advantage accrues from it to the evidence of Christianity. Its doctrines being thus diffused and intermingled with other matter, could not by any possibility have been so forged and inserted, as to leave no occasional mark of *seaming* and *joining*. Our Saviour's Gospel is like his robe, "without seam, woven throughout," and he who receives it, must take it all, for it cannot be divided.

Matter of Christian doctrine.

As to the *matter* of his teaching, his discourses aim either at correcting what was perverted, and explaining what was obscure in the preceding state of morals and religious knowledge, or else they declare truths not before revealed. With the several leading topics which they embrace, the Christian reader is presumed to be familiar; and it is sufficient to observe briefly, that of the former kind are his exhortations to *inward purity*, as opposed to mere outward acts of obedience, and compliance with the spirit rather than with the letter of the precept. To the latter class belong the doctrines of Atonement and Grace; of the Trinity in unity; certain points of revelation relating to a future state; and whatever else may be considered as peculiar to the Christian revelation.

III.—HIS MIRACLES.

Object of His miracles.

THE chief object of our Lord's miracles was to prove his mission; and it may be observed, that in this case, and in that of Moses, (of all who ever pretended to found a religion on them,) the miracles supported the credit of the religion, not the religion the credit of the miracles. As testimony, however, they do not properly form part of his ministry (as a teacher,) but they have likewise a moral and a religious meaning, and in this point of view they do so.

They have a moral meaning, because they are all benevolent, whereas as *proofs* they might have been destructive or indifferent, as were the miracles of Moses and the Prophets. As it is, they not only prove that Christ came from God, but declare that he came with a benevolent purpose.

Their analogy with his doctrines.

They have also a religious meaning, because they typified some of the chief doctrines of his Gospel. Thus when he converted into wine the water set for purification, he taught that sin was cleansed by his blood, and not by the ritual observances of the law. His divine nature was asserted by walking on the sea,[2] and by whatever other miracles invested him with the scriptural characteristics of Jehovah. When he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and enabled the lame to walk, he not only proved his authority, and exercised his compassion, but suggested the inference, that he had

[2] "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters."—Psalm lxxvii. 19. "The Lord is mightier than mighty waves."—Psalm xciii. 4.

come to restore our corrupted nature to its original purity, to enlighten the ignorant, as all men were, and to enable us to stand in the path of life, when without him we could not but fail and sink.

Hence possibly the necessity of faith in the persons on whom the miracles of healing were wrought; for if these miracles had no further intent than to prove his power, or even his benevolence, it is obvious that he, to whom were committed all things in heaven and in earth, did not need the concurrence of any object of power or of benevolence. But as he had made Faith necessary to that eternal salvation which he came to offer, it was fitting that the temporal deliverance should in like manner be offered with the same condition, if we suppose the latter to be intended as a type of the former; else the symbolical lesson would have been incomplete, and liable to misconstruction.

One observation more on our Lord's miracles. They were not only *proofs* of his authority, and means of instruction, but also specimens of that mercy, the full and entire display of which is reserved for hereafter.

To understand this, it must be borne in mind, that Satan brought into the world both sin and death, moral and natural evil; and the result of our Lord's triumph over him was to be the removal of both. In healing the sick, then, and raising the dead, the Saviour may be considered as giving an instance of the exercise of his power in removing *natural evil;* whilst the same was evinced with regard to *moral evil*, by casting out devils, the agents of him who was the source of sin. It was doubtless in reference to this latter object, that he caused them on one occasion to depart into a herd of swine, thus proving that the possession was real, and not the result of a disordered imagination. The same end might have been likewise contemplated in the record of the Temptation; for in neither of these instances at least could the power of imagination account for the phenomenon. In the first the Divine Being was above its delusions, in the other the brute was as much below it.[3]

IV.—HIS INSTITUTIONS.

Symbols long retained in Religious worship.

IN the first rude state of language, signs, gestures, and actions were no doubt the chief mode of expressing all ideas. But in religion, custom being more sacred than in the ordinary intercourse of life, the primitive vehicle of thought continued here longest in use, and was still the chief form of worship for ages after language became more intelligible than signs and symbols. In proof of this, we may observe how large a proportion of the latter was preserved in the religious service of the Israelites.

As the progress of language advanced, the primitive usage

[3] Warburton's Divine Legation, B. IX. C. V.

gradually declined, and in the last establishment of religion, only two symbolical institutions were appointed, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian symbols.

These, then, we might expect to find expressing the most important truths of that last revelation, in a form intelligible to the savage as well as to the philosopher, to men of all languages, and in all ages; and that such is the instruction which they convey is obvious. Atonement for sin by Christ's death on the cross, and the influences of the Holy Spirit in regenerating and sanctifying us—these are the main features of the Christian scheme; and these are embodied in the two Sacraments. Baptism, under the symbol of washing with water, represents our spiritual purification. In the Lord's Supper the symbol is twofold. The bread is broken, and the wine poured out, to denote his dying for us; the bread is also eaten, and the wine drunk, to denote the spiritual strength and refreshment, the life, which we derive from his mysterious presence and union with us. Their object

But why not, it may be said, in this latter, as in the former sacrament, adopt the most direct and exact representation of the scene so recorded, such as would be the flesh and blood of an animal? The case appears to be this: the atonement was so represented before the event took place, because a greater exactness was requisite to render the agreement of the event with its type so apparent as to be easily recognised and admitted: but so close a resemblance not being necessary in a commemorative symbol, (the event being already known, and the connexion between them admitted,) that symbol was changed, to prevent any confusion between the old rite, which was prophetic, and the new one, which was commemorative; between the Jewish sacrifice, which had no independent and inherent efficacy, and the Christian sacrifice, which possessed it. Their distinction.

V.—HIS PROPHECIES.

A PROPHECY is a miracle performed for posterity, and to our Lord's prophecies the same observation applies as to his miracles. One intent of them was to prove the truth of his mission: "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am he." So considered, the prophecies are not, strictly speaking, a portion of his ministry. But, like his miracles, they were also the vehicles of instruction, and this view of them falls under the present subject of remark. They may be conveniently arranged under four heads, as treating, Our Lord's Prophecies. John xiii. 19; xiv. 29.

1. Of Himself.
2. Of his Church or Religion.
3. Of certain individuals of his Church.
4. Of the Jewish Church or Religion.

I.—CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Their pre-eminence over other Prophecies.

Christ, in delivering prophecies concerning himself, may be considered as employed in framing an index to the work which he had in hand. It is natural to suppose, that those points which he thus selected, were by him considered as the leading features of it; and were selected in order to direct attention to them especially, and above all others.

Accordingly he foretold his betrayal, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and his second coming. Now if he had merely marked these for special notice by the finger of prophecy, and left the doctrines arising out of them to be gathered from other parts of his own discourses, or from the preaching and writings of his inspired servants, (as is the case to a certain extent,) still, to these doctrines would belong a character of importance, corresponding to that bestowed on the events by his notice of them. But his prophecies are frequently not only predictive, but explanatory; declaring at once the event to be, and the meaning and intent of it. Thus, in foretelling his death, the prediction conveys also the doctrine of the Atonement. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, *that* whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "I am the good Shepherd, the good Shepherd giveth his life *for the sheep.*" These and similar predictions then, when accomplished, became a commentary on the events. As in the first mentioned, for instance, when he was seen lifted up on the cross, there could be no doubt that by this means it was effected, that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John iii. 14, 15.

John x. 11.

II.—CONCERNING HIS CHURCH.

A didactic character may also be traced in the prophecies relating to his Church or Kingdom on earth. Viewed as the display of foreknowledge, they are, like other prophecies, only miracles in reserve, the germ of evidence which time was to unfold and bring to maturity. But the application of these prophecies to a specific purpose of instruction, is the circumstance which entitles them to be considered as part of the Saviour's ministry. It is said that "holy men" of old spake not of themselves, but as "the Holy Spirit moved them." Not so our Lord. He was not the instrument of prophecy, but prophecy was an instrument in his hands, employed at his discretion, and so employed as to make a part of his didactic ministry.

Instruction to be derived from them.

2 Peter i. 21.

Prophecy of the universal extent of Christianity.

Speaking of his Church, he sometimes alludes to it as already established; sometimes he points to the process by which that object was to be accomplished. Of the former subject, the leading

topic was, that his Church was to embrace within its pale all the world. Contrasted with its origin, it was as the stately tree compared with the seed from which it sprang; and as a little leaven leaveneth the whole mass, even so his little family of believers were to impart the gift which they had received from him, not to any one favoured people or sect, but to all nations. Occasionally, too, his Church is represented as a field in which tares had sprung up, or by images of a like import.

Now, keeping all this in view, let us call to mind how much the early progress of the Gospel was impeded by the Jewish prejudices respecting the nature of a Divine dispensation, which even those who were converts to Christianity could not conceive to be a thing intended alike for Gentile and Jew. The ideas of a Divine dispensation and of a chosen people were nearly inseparable. What then could be more appropriate and useful, than that our Lord's prophecies concerning his Church should point chiefly to its universality? In this point of view they were instruction, reproof, and prevention of error.

Of the difficulty of its propagation.

Again, the prophecies relating to the establishing of his Church, are full of the difficulties and distresses which awaited those who were employed in this work. The very assurance, that the gates of hell should not prevail against the fabric which they were appointed to rear, is an implied declaration of extreme peril to be expected; as the promise that he would be with them always, denotes that they should always need him. Of what use now could this view of the matter be to his followers in their arduous enterprise? that is, of what use, beyond the evidence arising from the fulfilment of prophecy? It was, doubtless, no small consolation to them, to know that their Master had foreseen all their difficulties, and provided against them. But there appears also a further design. Under the Mosaic dispensation, men had imbibed two prejudices which were inconsistent with the new covenant: the one, that all Divine revelation was confined to a particular people; the other, that God's people were to expect from him temporal rewards and punishments. As the former notion was counteracted by the prophecies relating to the universality of the Gospel, so the latter was to be corrected, by presenting to their minds continual warnings of persecution, hardship, and death. Agreeably to the doctrine of temporal rewards and punishments, the Jews had looked for a Messiah who should confer on his followers worldly glory and prosperity; but these earthly motives to obedience were henceforth to be cast out of religion, and the prophecies in question were placed as a guard to prevent their re-entrance.

It is probable then that the Saviour's prophecies relating to his Church, considered as part of his didactic ministry, were designed principally to correct the erroneous notion, that that Church was to be established on the same principles as the Jewish dispensation, which it was to supersede.

III.—CONCERNING CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.

ST. PETER.

Three prophecies relating to St. Peter are recorded in the Gospels. Of these the most important will be first considered.

Matt. xvi. 18, 19. explained.

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

As we have no clue to any connexion between this saying and any future supremacy vested in the apostle because of it, it is to be considered as a prophecy of the part he was to occupy, rather than an appointment; and as such its didactic character will be here examined.

By many indeed the words are understood as having no peculiar reference to St. Peter; or rather, as declaring no more concerning him than is elsewhere declared of the other apostles. And, indeed, if Peter had been the apostle's original name, and not applied to him by our Lord himself, as if on account of some peculiarity in his character or condition, it might be fairly argued, that our Lord's language to him only differed from that which he addressed to the others, in being an allusion to his name. But the name was obviously given him because of his future destination, not that destination so expressed because of the name. Bishop Marsh,[4] accordingly, has applied the prophecy to him viewed as the founder of the Church at Jerusalem, which was, as he contends, more peculiarly the Church of Christ. His argument certainly rests upon the surest ground, the result. St. Peter was not the founder of an Universal Church, but of the Church at Jerusalem.[5]

The images of which the prophecy is composed are a rock—a church built on it—the keys of it—and the gates of hell. At least, these are all the images contained in that portion of the prophecy which was addressed to St. Peter, and to none else. Now, whatever meaning we choose to elicit from them, it will hardly be denied, on a moment's consideration, that they were amongst the most familiar to Jewish ears, because amongst the most common of their scriptural figures. Secondly, that they apply in their literal signification most remarkably to the Jewish temple, its situation, and other circumstances. Built on a rock—the one Church of God

[4] See Comparative View, App. p. 23.

[5] The reader may here require to be reminded of the remark already made on the recurrence of the same topics in the various discourses of our Lord.

But, after all, the Protestant advocate need not be very solicitous about settling the precise import of the promise to St. Peter; that is, as far as it affects the controversy between Protestants and Papists; for, whatever kind of *foundation* St. Peter was to the Church, it is obvious that the image employed in the metaphor excludes the notion of a *succession of persons similarly circumstanced.*

heretofore, and its keys the badge of authority to him who held them —that Church was now given over to the gates of Hades, and the Christian Church was to be established instead.

Accordingly in this prophecy, concerning the founder of the new Church at Jerusalem, our Lord has crowded together some of the most familiar Jewish images, and those of a kind calculated to recall the ancient temple to men's minds. Now, however obscure his language might become to others, by reason of this assemblage of national figures, to the Jews it would on that very account be the more explicit, and they would the more readily recognise its particular application to them. We hear of no doubts originating in these words, as to St. Peter's rank and authority—of no question, in short, about the meaning, being agitated in the early Church. When St. Peter took on him the ministry of the circumcision, and still more on his first preaching at Jerusalem, the converted Jew might have remembered the words of the Lord Jesus, and understood that the former temple was now consigned to destruction, and the new one in the hands of him who bore the office designated by the keys.

ST. JOHN.

"If this man tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

John xxi. 22, explained.

What was affirmed in these words concerning St. John, was applied on another occasion to some whose names are not specified. "There be some standing here who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." The didactic use of these prophecies seems to have been to check the erroneous notion, that whenever Christ spoke of his "coming," it meant his coming to judge the world at the last day. For the expression, "shall not taste of death *until*," &c., rather implies that those persons should afterwards taste death; and that this expression concerning St. John was intended only to convey the same meaning, we learn from that apostle himself: "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come," &c.

Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27.

John xxi. 23.

JUDAS ISCARIOT.

As our Lord was to be betrayed by one of his apostles, it seems but natural that this should be made the subject of prophecy by him, in order to prevent any possible objection respecting his want of foresight in the choice of the twelve. Such, then, might have been the primary design of this prophecy. But, like his others, its record might have been intended to convey also some instruction to the Church in after times—even to us.

Matt. xxvi. 25, explained.

Indeed it cannot but strike one as remarkable, not that he should be betrayed, but that his betrayal (and that by one of his own

friends) should be made a necessary part in his scheme of life as marked out for him in ancient prophecy, and that he should point to it, as to one of those important figures in the great prophetic painting, at which we are to pause and learn something.

Now the circumstances of the betrayal were such, as to make it highly probable that Judas did not intend the death of his Master, but rather designed to force him to an open declaration of himself as a temporal King; the character under which he was at that time obstinately contemplated, even by his most faithful followers. Otherwise, indeed, it would be impossible to account for his behaviour at the last supper. As, for instance, that he should leave the room to execute his purpose, knowing that our Lord was aware whither he was going, and with what intent. Doubtless he thought, that if his stratagem succeeded, his impatient zeal would not only have been excused, but even honoured and rewarded. The rejection of the wages of his guilt too, the natural result of severe disappointment, is perfectly consistent with this view.[6]

It is probable, therefore, that the apostles considered the crime of Judas simply as an act of treachery or treason. He is not called murderer, bloody, or inhuman, but traitor. Regarding the Church as a kingdom of which Christ is the head, his offence was not so properly moral as political. It was a presumptuous attempt to change the constitution of that kingdom, by introducing into it the pomp and power of this world. And if so, this prophecy might have served (among many others more obviously framed with this view) to warn the apostles and their successors, not to betray the holy charge with which they were intrusted, by attempting, whether from motives of avarice and ambition, or from want of confidence in the support of Heaven, to convert Christ's spiritual crown into an earthly one.

PROPHECY CONCERNING MARY.

Matt. xxvi. 13; Mark xiv. 9; John xi. 1, explained.

The incident which gave occasion to this was the anointing the Lord's feet by Mary, who is said to have been the sister to Lazarus: and the prophecy was, "Wheresover this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her." Our Lord adds the reason, why he made a circumstance apparently so trivial, the occasion of so marked a prophetic declaration; "for in that she hath poured the ointment on my body, she did it for my burial."

May we not venture to infer, that Mary's faith was clearer than

[6] The common view of Judas's crime, that it proceeded from avarice, is so unsatisfactory, that many have been at no small pains to set the transaction in a more intelligible light. Michaelis (see Introd. to the New Test. vol. iii. pp. 23, 24, Marsh's edition,) attributes the act of treachery to revenge for the rebuke which Judas received respecting the unction at Bethany. Mr. Thruston's very ingenious book, "The Night of Treason," seems to leave no room for further doubt or controversy.—See Thruston's "Night of Treason."

that of the other disciples, in that she did not find in our Lord's death a scruple to her belief in him as the Messiah? Our Lord's words seem to intimate this. Immediately after the anointing, Judas went out to betray him, and a discussion commenced respecting the rank his followers were to hold in his kingdom, as if arising out of some remark which he had made on what Mary had done. Lastly, we read his declaration, "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke xxii. 29, 30.

NATHANAEL, AND THE THIEF ON THE CROSS.

There are two other prophetic declarations which our Lord made to individuals, and which may seem to require notice in the view here taken of his prophecies. The first is that to Nathanael. "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." But if this be applicable indeed to Nathanael individually, for it is expressed in the plural, it can only be considered as a general figurative allusion to those signs of Divine communication, the miracles,[7] by which he was to prove that he was the Son of God, the King of Israel, and is not therefore specific enough to be classed among the prophecies. Luke xxiii. 43, explained. John i. 51.

The other was a prophetic promise relating to a state beyond the ordinary use of prophecy. We cannot recognise its fulfilment, nor was it, from its very nature, made with the common object and intent of all his prophecies, "that when these things come to pass ye may know that I am he." It is therefore rather to be classed with his other revelations of a future state, and as such belongs not to the present point of inquiry.

IV.—CONCERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

The holy city, the temple and its service, together with the existence of the Jews as a nation, comprised the externals of the old dispensation. All that was real and vital in that dispensation, had been done away with on the opening of our Lord's mission; but the closing scene, which was to annihilate the outward form, thus deprived of its living principle, was the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the dispersion of its worshippers. The visible church having been ever regarded as co-existent with, and inseparable from, the dispensation itself, the total removal of the former was the sign and pledge that the latter was indeed taken away. Until this event the slow believing Jew might have had some plea for asserting, that "in Judah alone was God known," and "that Jerusalem was still the place where men ought to worship;" but Ps. lxxvi. 1. John iv. 20.

[7] The original word translated "hereafter," is ἀπάρτι, which means literally "from now," "from this time forth."

the prophetic finger which charactered its downfal, wrote a language, the interpretation of which was well understood to be, "The kingdom of heaven is departed from thee."

No wonder then that our Lord should dwell on this subject with such minuteness and solemnity, as to give the prophecy an air of importance beyond all his others. He came to do away with the old covenant and to establish the new. This was his work, and with reference to this, the propriety of those expressions whereby he announces himself as the author of this formal consummation of his ministry is obvious. Looking to the principle on which these remarks have proceeded, we may expect to find, too, the didactic tendency of such a prophecy bearing upon some point of proportionate consequence; and a brief analysis of the structure of its language will show that such is remarkably the case. That language may be arranged under three heads:—

1. The literal description of the events prophesied; for instance, "As for these things which ye behold, the days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another."

Mark xiii. 2; Luke xix. 44; xxi. 6.

2. The metaphorical, or rather hieroglyphic language adopted from the Jewish Scriptures, especially the prophets; for instance, "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken."

Mark xiii. 25.

3. The third source of imagery is the day of our Lord's second coming to judge the world; and as in this is suspended the *moral* of the prophecy, to this all further remarks will be confined.

Up to the period of our Saviour's advent, the progress of the Jewish dispensation had been so ordained, as to be made applicable in its several successive parts to the Christian, when it should be given; applicable, as the type to its counterpart, the shadow to its substance. Much of the history of the Jewish church is, according to the interpretation of inspired wisdom, a series of prophecies or emblems designed to be fulfilled in the Christian. When our Saviour came, and commenced his ministry, the closing scene of the old covenant was all that remained; and here, by a reversed order, the closing scene of the Christian dispensation was made to furnish the instruments and emblems of prophecy for the end of the Jewish. It may be necessary to explain what is meant by this assertion, before the didactic import of the prophecy so framed is pointed out.

It is not unusual to say, that our Lord has blended in this prophecy, the events of the last day with those of the downfal of Jerusalem; which is not a complete view of the case, and hardly a correct one as far as it does go. His use of these mysterious images, should rather be considered the same as his use of the hieroglyphic symbols of ancient prophecy; that is, *they are employed in the prophecy only in their secondary and symbolical meaning.* When, for instance, we read, that the Lord "will send his angels

and gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," *the only meaning of the description in this place* is, that which relates to the fate of his elect on the destruction of Jerusalem. I do not deny that it is capable of another interpretation, and that it is a description of part of the last day's eventful scene; nay more, I should say, that is its literal and original meaning; and I should say in like manner of the expressions, "the stars falling from heaven," and "the sun being turned into darkness," that if they were not taking a part, as it were, in the figurative representation of prophecy, they would signify the actual derangement of the heavenly system. But as, in this latter case, the descriptions are here introduced only in their secondary application, so we may conclude that in the former instance the same only is intended. For it is to be observed, that all the revelation concerning the last day contained in these prophecies had been previously detailed in one form or another. The *revelation* had been already made, and this was only an adaptation of its imagery to the destruction of Jerusalem. The propriety of this method is another question; but those who are disposed to regard it as intricate and unnatural, should remember, that the revealed circumstances of the last day, had to the mind of a believer already assumed the form and certainty of recorded events, and admitted, in an address to him, of the same use as historical facts. For, to a believer, what is prophecy but anticipated history?

Matt. xxiv. 31.

Such appears to be the true character of this prophecy. At the same time, that some indistinctness and confusion should exist in a cursory view of it is natural enough, considering that a portion of its imagery is derived from a state of things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." It is the necessary result of our want of an appropriate and literal language for unearthly revelation. All description of such mysteries can only be composed of terms adopted or metaphorical; and where (as in this prophecy) a *second* transfer of these terms has been made, it is not immediately obvious, whether the objects from which that language is borrowed, be those whose original property it is, or those others which have invaded, and taken possession of it, for want of a language of their own.

But if the introduction of these topics into the prophecy in question was not made with a view to reveal the mysteries of the last day, what was the intent? It has been already suggested, that the fate of Jerusalem probably represented the fate of the old dispensation. Now if the end of the world was to the Christian dispensation what the destruction of Jerusalem was to the Mosaic, the inference forced on men's minds by having these two corresponding events continually brought in close connexion before them was, *that Christianity was the final covenant of God with man*, that Christ having once come, we were never to look for another Mediator, and another dispensation.

That such was actually the impression wrought by these means on the earliest ages, may be not unfairly presumed, from the transition which soon took place in the application of the terms, "the last days," "the end of the world," &c. First adopted as descriptive of the end of Jerusalem, from the hint they continually afforded, by the mode of their use, that Christianity was the final dispensation, they gradually came to be used for the whole *Christian period*, considered in that light. Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews (the main object of which is to assert this very truth) opens with a contrast between the old and the new covenants, and designates the period of the latter by "these last days." "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past by the prophets unto the fathers, hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by his Son."

Heb. i. 1, 2.

In short, the images of the end of the world were first employed in our Saviour's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, in the same manner as if, using hieroglyphics, he had expressed that event by a picture of the circumstances under which the world was to end: in his choice of these images he probably designed to inculcate the doctrine, that Christianity was the final dispensation of God to mankind; and from the impression thus produced, the phrases, "the last days," the "end of the world," and the like, came to signify the whole period of the Christian dispensation, viewed in the light of God's final covenant with his creatures.

VI.—THE TEMPTATION AND TRANSFIGURATION.

THERE are two events in our Saviour's history, which, although not generally considered as making part of his ministry to man, yet are so far mysteriously connected with it as to deserve a particular notice. The first is,

THE TEMPTATION.

Matt. iv. 1; Mark i. 13; Luke iv. 2.

In the exposition of this, more perhaps than of any other passage of Scripture, the theologian requires to be reminded of his proper province. Many, exercising their ingenuity in the unprofitable attempt to explain the *real nature* of those mysteries which God has disclosed to us, instead of *their reference to us*, have made it, and other awful and glorious spectacles of revelation, subjects of contemplation and wonder, rather than symbols of instruction. Revelation has been fitly called "Light." Its great author has designated himself as "Light." But it is a light to see by, not to gaze at. It is analogous, not to any dazzling meteor in the appearance of nature, or to any splendid spectacle produced by art, but to that glorious luminary, which is not the less serviceable in enabling us to be sure of our path, that we cannot stedfastly behold it.

Out of this arises another error. Mistaking the character of theological knowledge, we naturally mistake its extent and limits. If a subject be proposed to us, the real nature of which we are to

study, it seems just and reasonable that it should be placed before us *in a complete form*. If agriculture, for instance, had been a subject of revelation, men would doubtless not only have been instructed in the right method of preparing the earth, but the necessity of sowing the seed; and whatever else might be requisite to secure a complete harvest, would have been included in the revelation. Accordingly the theologian who expects so to understand such parts of the scheme of redemption as have been revealed, as if the knowledge were absolute and not relative, naturally attempts to fill up that scheme, so as to make all appear rational, intelligible, wise, merciful,—in short, perfect. All which is contrary to Scripture. For, St. Paul affirms, in the first place, that "now we see through a glass darkly," and secondly, that "we know *in part*." Scenes infinitely more mysterious, unaccountable, and awful than the temptation, or even than the death of Christ, may have taken place in the scheme of man's redemption, of which we know no more than the unborn does of life. And even with regard to those points which are revealed, we shall strangely bewilder ourselves if we so use them, as forgetting that they are lights to see by, not to look at.

1 Cor. xiii. 12, 9.

The character and design of the temptation may perhaps be best understood by contrasting it with the crucifixion. The former was the commencement, the latter the close of Christ's work. They correspond, too, in one remarkable circumstance. *Each was the hour of Satan.* In the first, Christ was led into the wilderness purposely to be tempted by him, and that ended, the devil departed from him "for a season." That the concluding scene of his ministry was the occasion when he was permitted to return, and once more to display the utmost exertion of his power, is not only probable from the character of the event, but seems to be clearly intimated by our Saviour's words, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness;" "The prince of this world cometh."

Luke iv. 13

Luke xxii. 53.

John xiv. 30.

Now the great object of Christ's ministry was to undo the mischief which the evil being had done. And this was twofold: first, he had introduced into the world sin; secondly, he had introduced death. Now it is admitted by all rational Christians, that the solemn spectacle on the cross had reference to the latter. Christ's death there is said to be vicarious, that is, he died instead of those who were the proper subjects of death: he died, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" in other words, he died for his Church. In the mysterious scene of the crucifixion, he may be considered as representing the universal Church, undergoing (as it must collectively, and in its members separately) the mortal decay and dissolution of this world, but escaping from the spiritual evils accompanying that decay and dissolution in a world to come. Christ died and rose again from the dead, in order to exhibit death as it was in future to take place; that is

John ii. 15, 16.

separated from all that was most horrible in it, divested of its "terrors," disarmed of its "sting," and no longer the same death.

Now let us turn to our more immediate subject, the temptation. Satan had brought into the world sin as well as death; sin before death; its forerunner, and its cause. Now the temptation appears to have been with regard to sin, what the crucifixion was with regard to death. It was a vicarious representation. Christ was first tempted instead of his Church, and afterwards died instead of it. But, as his death did not imply that his Church was not afterwards to be subject to mortality, but only that the worst and most characteristic evil of death was done away with; so, with regard to the temptation, he was tempted instead of his Church, not in order that his Church should be no more tempted, but to show that the strongest temptations should no longer be necessarily fatal; that he who was then the earthly abode of the Godhead, having manifested, and given a specimen of, the curtailed and no longer resistless power of the evil one, his followers might know, that when he left the world, and God was manifested in another way, namely, by his Holy Spirit, that the abode of the Godhead on earth should still be equally secure against temptation, if the same use were made of the same power "working in it;"[8] that his Church, which is now the earthly residence of the Godhead, and whose members are "the
1 Cor. vi. 19. temple of the Holy Ghost," should still indeed be tempted, as was
Col. ii. 9. he in whom "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," but like him not necessarily unto sin.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

Matt. xvii. 2; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 28. One cannot but be struck, on perusing the Gospels, with the continual request of the Jews to have a *sign* given them from heaven, even whilst our Lord was in the act of performing his signs and miracles for their conversion. Their desire (as was before observed) appears to have been founded on the prophecy of Daniel, which
Dan. vii. 13. describes the Son of man as "coming with the clouds of heaven." The belief evidently was, that the Messiah should be seen literally descending from the heavens, and arrayed in some brilliant emblem of his glory. That the fulfilment of this expectation might have been intended in the transfiguration, seems not improbable, from the remark of the apostles who were permitted to be witnesses of it. Their words seem to denote that *all ground of scruple* was now
Matt. xvii. 10. removed: "Why say the Scribes then that Elias must first come?"

The appearance of Moses and Elias conversing with him was obviously a token that the covenant was changed, and the Law and the Prophets succeeded by the Gospel.

[8] "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," are words, which can be only understood as implying, that Christ was then what the Jewish temple had been, and what the Church was to be, *viz.*, the abode of the Godhead.

CONCLUSION.

Before I close this part of my subject, the allegorical interpretation which has been claimed for certain passages of our Lord's ministry, may seem to call for some further remarks. It may be asked, "Why should such a mode of instruction be adopted, the more natural way being for our Lord to deliver his doctrines in express terms; and as he has actually done so, what need of another language to convey the same truth?"

In the first place, then, to the Jews the more natural method was the allegorical; such being the character of their numerous rites, and of the greater part of their Scriptures.

Besides which, the Christian's view of the *doctrines* of his religion was hereby connected with the *proofs* of it. The same miracle furnished at once instruction and proof of the teacher's authority to instruct; so also did the completion of a prophecy.[9]

To which I may add, that in the case of a miracle assuming the character of a prophecy, the miracle carries with it its own proof that it was not a forgery or delusion. The importance, then, of perceiving the secondary character of such miracles, at least, is obvious.

It cannot be denied that an injudicious application of the method very soon prevailed among Christians, and to this it is owing that it has so long fallen into disuse, and is so generally regarded as at best but fanciful.

Nevertheless, to reject it altogether (as many are disposed to do) is, perhaps, to close our eyes against one half of the meaning of Scripture; and it may always be at least *safely* adopted, when it is not made the ground of any new doctrine.

[9] See Appendix [E.]

PART II.

APOSTOLIC AGE.

From A.D. 33—100.

CHAPTER I.

Distinction in Christianity, as taught by our Saviour and by his Apostles.

In treating of our Lord's ministry, it was remarked, that some of the most important points of the Christian scheme were either wholly omitted by him, or lightly touched on. Few, even preparatory, steps appear to have been taken for the establishment of his Church —that kingdom which was to comprehend all mankind. As if the very office of initiating members into this great society did not properly belong to him, he baptized none. His revelations were for the most part communicated in parables, or by hints and allusions equally obscure; and although it is true, that his apostles were allowed an explanation of these, yet it is clear that at his death, and even after his ascension, they were as much in the dark on some of the main truths of redemption, as were the Jews who crucified him.

It is evident, indeed, that our Saviour's object in his ministry was not to teach Christianity, nor to establish the Christian society. It was necessary that he should leave the world, in order that he might become the subject of the one, and the head of the other. John xvi. 7. "It is expedient for you that I go away," are words in which he plainly declares this himself. The office of making Christians was the office of the Comforter. God manifested himself in the flesh, to redeem the world, and to atone for sin—to be made the object of a new faith, the subject of a new religion. God manifested himself by the Spirit, to instruct men in what he had done, and to teach them what they were bound, in consequence of this, to do.

Evident as this may be when stated, it is very apt to be overlooked or forgotten. Many have been the fruitless and unsatisfactory attempts to reconcile the Gospels with the Epistles,—one part of the new covenant with the other, proceeding on a vague conception,

of the whole being promulgated at the same time, and with the same intent.

It may be useful therefore, for the purpose of marking clearly the distinction alluded to, to consider it more exactly, as exhibited in what was taught and what was done—in the words and the works of our Lord on the one hand, and of our Lord's apostles on the other; both proceeding from the same Divine source, and harmonizing so as to produce one common result; yet so different in their character and import, as to occasion serious error in those who neglect the difference.

Difference in their Miracles.

First, then, our Saviour wrought miracles, and so did the Apostles, and so did Moses, Elias, and many others commissioned by Heaven. To a careless observer, then, it may be satisfactory to say, that Christ's were superior to the others, because they were more in number, and perhaps greater in kind, than had been performed by his predecessors, or were to be performed by his followers. Granting this, however, we may still reasonably expect to find in Christ's miracles, not merely superior power, but somewhat in that superiority which should especially denote the character of his mission. Else the manifestation of superiority would be only a barren display of power, a thing very inconsistent with the general scheme of God's dealings. Indeed, as if to denote that the difference was not to be sought for in superiority of power, he expressly told his disciples, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and *greater works than these shall he do;* because I go to my Father." Let any one, then, candidly and attentively examine the mode of exercising this power in both cases, and he will scarcely fail to observe,

John xiv. 12.

Christ in His Miracles the primary agent.

I. That in our Lord's miracles, he was the primary agent; in those of the apostles and others, they were instruments. Several incidental circumstances may be noticed in illustration of this position. No one, for instance, was more fully invested with the power of healing than was St. Paul; for we read, that certain sick folk recovered only by touching his garments; yet we are equally sure, that he was but the medium through which the Comforter performed these miraculous cures; because we find him, on one occasion, leaving behind him at Miletum a useful coadjutor, *because he was sick,* and on another occasion suggesting to Timothy an ordinary remedy for an infirmity under which he was labouring. In our Saviour's ministry, on the contrary, human means are never resorted to, so as to imply the want of miraculous power. His miracles are at one time the result of persevering importunity,[1] at another the dictate of friendship or of pity;[2] and on one remarkable occasion he rebuked them for having recourse to ordinary means, as implying the failure of this resource in him. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray

Acts xix. 12.

2 Tim. iv. 20.

1 Tim. v. 23.

[1] *E.G.* Luke xviii. 35; Matt. xv. 22.
[2] *E.G.* The case of Lazarus, that of the widow of Nain's son, &c.

Matt. xxvi. 53. to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" All this was surely intended to point to the *discretionary* power which was peculiarly his. To him alone God gave the spirit not by measure. The very words which he used in the exercise of miraculous power have a distinct character; such as, "Lazarus, come forth," "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise;" whilst in the miracles themselves, in many of them at least, the marks are more unequivocal. Take the cure of Malchus's ear—who does not see in such an act as this, the unconstrained agency of Divinity, called into exercise by the circumstances themselves, and not connected, as in the case of the Apostles, with any special commission, nor directed to any special purpose, beyond the display of Christ's real character? Who, in short, can peruse the course of his ministry, and not sympathize with the sister of Lazarus, in that tone of mind which caused her to exclaim, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died?"

John xi. 43. Luke vii. 14.

John xi. 21, 32.

His Miracles generally symbolical.

II. There is another line of distinction, still more discernible, between our Lord's miracles and those of the Apostles, and of all others. They were generally *symbolical*—the vehicles of instruction, as well as the signs of power. Like the voice from Mount Sinai, they were at once miracles and revelations, a Divine language, conveying a Divine message. And this circumstance, if rightly considered, not a little confirms the view which has been taken of the primary, immediate, and independent agency of Christ, as contrasted with the instrumental character of his Apostles; the former, not only performing acts above human nature, but moulding them at will to serve occasional purposes, as if the power were his own, part of his original nature; the latter humbly, fearfully, and almost passively obeying the dictates of a secretly controlling power, and avowing that they "had nothing to glory of, for necessity was laid on them."

1 Cor. ix 16.

His unlimited power of imparting Spiritual gifts.

III. Among all the miraculous acts, in which our Lord and his Apostles may be contrasted, the one wherein an equality between them is most likely to be presumed, is the power of imparting the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Of this more particular notice will be taken by and by. At present it deserves attention, merely in the light of a miraculous power, as distinctly superior to all others, as the power of imparting life exceeds the privilege of partaking it. Yet it is obvious, that in their use of this, as of the other powers, the Apostles were restricted, whereas our Lord's conduct exhibits no signs of any limitation. As no one would suppose the Apostles to be the authors of life, because they were occasionally permitted to recall the dead to life; so, the office of imparting the gifts of the Holy Spirit did not imply that these gifts proceeded originally from them, or that they were any but the instruments and agents of communication.

A similar character (as has been already pointed out) pervades

our Lord's prophecies, as distinguished from all others, whether of the Old or the New Testament. Distinction between their Prophecies.

The exercise of the predictive power, proved in all cases alike, that the prophet was commissioned by God. But the constant and unvaried employment of that very prophetic spirit for doctrinal instruction—its use, in short, for purposes not prophetical, could only have been designed to indicate, what it does most plainly, that the prophet wielded that Divine instrument at pleasure, and not as one, "who spake only as the Holy Ghost moved him." In Christ, the prophetic faculty was exercised as his own; in his Apostles and others, it was only exhibited as through agents and instruments. The language of the inspired mortal is, "I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind;" that of the Author of inspiration, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Num. xxii. 18; xxiv. 13. John xxi. 22.

It would be easy to pursue this subject further, but it may be sufficient merely to add, that in considering the secondary use to which Christ applied the Divine agency, as an indication that he was a Divine person, it deserves notice that it was of himself, or of his kingdom, or of his work—of himself, in short, either immediately or remotely, that he caused his miracles to speak. So that every miracle, every prophecy, is used by him for some purpose beyond its specific and appropriate one, and that purpose one connected with himself, "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, *the same works* that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." John v. 36.

His sermons, exhortations, precepts, commandments, all lead us forcibly to the same conclusion. All are addressed to mankind, no less than the law from Mount Sinai, in the person of God himself. As to the *language*, it is, "A new commandment *I* give unto you." "It was said to them[3] of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but *I say unto you*, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." Still more may the matter of his discourses be appealed to, for marks of a difference occasioned by the same cause. Our Lord did not, indeed could not, preach the whole of Christianity to his disciples and to the world; because the subject was incomplete, until he had suffered on the cross, risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. The most essential points of Christian instruction were precisely those which could not yet be given, for the simple reason, that the events out of which they arose had not yet taken place. Hence his assertion, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." General character of his Discourses. John xiii. 34. John xvi. 7.

Christianity then, strictly speaking, commenced with the preaching

[3] Matt. v. 21, 22, and Whitby on the passage.

Christianity begun by the Apostles.

of the apostles. It is the dispensation of the Spirit, and by the Spirit only has it been conducted. Our Lord is the subject, the foundation stone,[4] not the founder of it. It holds up to us as the object of our faith, "God manifested in the flesh;" but the world is directed to this truth, and assisted in embracing it, and acting on it, by God manifested by the Spirit. The apostles accordingly were expressly forbidden to begin their ministry, until the formal sign was given, that the Comforter had descended amongst them. Until that event, the world was no more under the Christian dispensation than Israel was under the Mosaic before the Law was actually given,—whatever anticipation, either Moses on the one hand or the apostles on the other, might be supposed to have had of the revelation which was preparing. That the apostles were imperfectly acquainted with the leading principles of Christianity, is evident beyond a doubt. Why else, indeed, should it be necessary to send one, not only "to bring all things to their remembrance," but "to teach them all things?" Why that expression of disappointment and despondency, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," if indeed they knew aught of the doctrine of redemption by his death? None, surely, who understood the nature of Christ and of Christ's kingdom can be supposed to have put such a question to him as, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" a question which goes the farther to prove that our Lord was not fully qualifying his disciples to instruct the world; that manifestly as it arose from ignorance and error, he did not attempt to correct them; but only referred them to the coming of Him, whose proper office it was to do so, and reminded them of the only part which he had qualified them to assume, to be his witnesses. "He said unto them, It is not for you," (or as it may be rendered,) you cannot be expected, "to know the times or seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses."

1 Tim. iii. 16.

John xiv. 26.

Luke xxiv. 21.

Acts i. 6.

Acts i. 7, 8.

Three periods of Apostolic History.

Even after that first descent of the Holy Ghost, Christianity was in its infancy. The illumination of the Spirit was gradual, and as more light was required, then, and then only, was the supply given. It is easy to trace three distinct periods in the Apostolic History, in the first of which the Church was kept in ignorance of the second, and had advanced far upon the second before the third was declared to them, and each by a special revelation.[5] Their ministry commenced with the Jews alone. It appears certain, that the apostles themselves did not then understand that it was ever to be extended beyond their countrymen. Their ancient national error was not yet

[4] Thus St. Paul, in his use of this very metaphor, addresses the Ephesian Church, as a building whose "chief corner-stone was Jesus Christ, in whom," adds he, "ye also are builded together for an habitation of God *through the Spirit*."—Eph. ii. 22.

[5] See Lord Barrington's Miscellanea Sacra.

removed, that through Judaism the world must be admitted to the benefits of the Messiah's advent—must be saved, not as the sons of fallen Adam, but as the children of righteous Abraham. Under this impression they taught through Judæa, Samaria, and at last at Antioch.

The Gospel preached to the Jews A.D. 33–41. Acts xi. 19.

Then it was, that, by a special vision sent to Peter, his scruples were first removed, and he was made to understand, by the conversion of Cornelius and his household, that a door was opened to the Gentiles. But to what Gentiles? Not to all indiscriminately, but to such as, like Cornelius, were "devout Gentiles," "fearing God," otherwise known as "proselytes of the gate." Gentiles who, without becoming altogether Jews, had adopted their belief in the one true God, and sought acceptance with him by alms, by fasting, and by prayer. Yet of the baptism even of these, St. Peter's report to the Church of Jerusalem is but an apology. "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift, as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?"

Acts x. 10. To Jews and Devout Gentiles. A.D. 41–45. Acts xi. 17.

Lastly, a further light broke forth on the Church, when, by another express revelation, Paul and Barnabas were separated for the conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles. Of all the wonderful counsel of the Lord, this was considered the most wonderful. This it is which is especially styled "the mystery of godliness," the revealing of which produced a sensation, both within and without the Church, to which no one who would understand the writings and the history of the great apostle of the Gentiles, should be inattentive.

To Jews, Devout Gentiles, and Idolaters. Acts. xiii. 2.

These three classes of converts—the Jewish, the devout Gentile, and the idolatrous Gentile—continued to be addressed and treated as in certain respects distinct, until "the end of all things," the grand consummation which took place in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the downfal of the nation. By this act of Divine visitation, the Jewish society was dissolved, and the Jews were no longer entitled to be treated as a distinct civil body. With this event, accordingly, ceased that scrupulous regard which previously the Christian preachers had paid to them as such. The converted Jew was henceforth under no civil obligation to retain the customs of his fathers, and the proselyte of the gate was released from obedience to a society which was extinct, and was henceforth no more bound to abstain from things strangled and from blood, than was the idolater who had never entered into a compact with the worshippers of the temple. Christ's kingdom was come.[6]

A.D. 70.

[6] Lardner argues from this slow and gradual illumination of the inspired Church, that neither St. Matthew nor St. Luke's Gospel could have been composed very early; inasmuch as both display an insight into that mystery, which was reserved for the last stage of revelation. But his reasoning is scarcely admissible. For, the apostles, as witnesses, may have recorded or assisted others in recording facts, before the full import of those facts was revealed to them; and St. Luke and St. Matthew write narratives in the strictest sense, and not treatises.

WHAT PREPARATION CHRIST HAD MADE BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

Notwithstanding the assertion, that the establishment of Christianity was the province of the Comforter—of God the Holy Ghost—that assertion by no means implies that our Saviour's ministry contributed nothing towards the forming of that institution, of which he was properly the subject. During his abode on earth, he had sent forth twelve of his followers, and again seventy, with a commission to baptize, and to proclaim "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He had instituted the sacraments, and had appointed a form of prayer. All which may be considered as preparatory to that which was peculiarly the work of the Holy Spirit, and analogous to that preparation which had been made for his appearance on earth as our Redeemer, by the previous manifestations of God. Accordingly, although his teaching, it may be, embraces all the essential doctrines of Christianity, yet from the very form adopted, that of parables, symbolical miracles, and didactic prophecies, the truths so deposited with his followers were plainly not designed to be understood, until the Holy Spirit should not only have brought all Christ's ministry to their remembrance, but taught them also all things implied and intended by it. Until such assistance was given, they were in possession of a revelation which they did not understand; and without this assistance there can be no question that the Christian doctrines could never have been understood, explained, and preached. So, likewise, the Mosaic establishment had continued in its most important features inexpressive, ineffectual, and useless, until our Saviour's fulfilment of the law displayed it in its true character, and explained its chief meaning. In short, from Adam until Christ, the scheme of man's redemption was prefigured; in Christ's ministry it was accomplished; by the Spirit it was explained. From Adam until Christ, the religious knowledge of the world was like the gradual dawning of light which precedes the sunrise, and from which we infer the existence and anticipate the approach of the sun itself. Christ came; but his coming was as when the sun has risen in mist and cloud, and can scarcely be discerned. And then came the Holy Spirit, like the breath of heaven which blows aside the cloud, and enables us to look upon the source of all the day-light with which we have been gradually blessed. So, also, our present condition as a Church may have some latent connexion with futurity, which we shall then only be qualified to perceive, when God shall again manifest himself, and we "see him even as he is."

Matt. x. 5, 7; Mark vi. 7, 12; Luke ix. 1, 2; x. 1, 9.

What is now to be considered is, how far the ministry of the Holy Spirit had been anticipated by our Saviour.

Prophetic character of His teaching.

I. His promulgation of the Christian doctrines has already been noticed, as conveyed in a form not designed to be understood until

the illumination of the Holy Ghost should be applied; many of them depending on events which had not as yet taken place; as *e.g.* the doctrine of the Atonement, which arose out of his death, and of the Resurrection, which was testified by himself rising from the grave. The most remarkable anticipation, however, was the command to baptize in the name of the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father and the Son; inasmuch as God, in the person of the Spirit, had not yet assumed the government of the Church.

The Apostles.

II. With a like prospective view, the twelve apostles had been commissioned, first, by baptism and preaching repentance, to prepare men for the new era; secondly, in his last interview with them, to be his witnesses. Their former commission (as from its nature might seem natural) expired on their return to resume their attendance on him; but this latter (as appears from its character and from his own words) they were intended to bear permanently under the new dispensation. Hence the office of apostle was really twofold. He was a witness of Christ, and he was a minister of the Holy Ghost. By virtue of his former appointment he was invested with the power of working miracles, which power he accordingly received from Christ himself. In the latter capacity he was furnished with those extraordinary endowments of the Holy Ghost, which are therefore called peculiarly the gifts of the Spirit. Of these it is the Psalmist speaks, when he describes our Lord as "ascending up on high to receive gifts for men." For thus Christ also said, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I go I will send him unto you." As witnesses, then, the apostles performed those miracles which are termed "signs" (σημεῖα) and "wonders;" (τέρατα); and inasmuch as this office was of our Lord's appointing, to him perpetually, and not to the Holy Spirit, they refer them.[7] Thus Peter bids the lame man at the beautiful gate of the

Witnesses of Christ and Ministers of the Holy Ghost.

Ps. lxviii. 18.

John xvi. 7.

[7] The scriptural expression is "*in his name*," and "*in that name*;" a mode of speaking, which seems to denote an anxiety to avoid conveying the notion of Tritheism, in teaching the doctrine of the Trinity. It reminds the Christian, that he of whom the Scriptures are speaking, was the same God, in whose former name the old revelations had been made, and the miracles of old had been wrought; that it was "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."—2 Cor. v. 19.

Accordingly, when the apostles were forbidden to preach Christianity to the Jews, the prohibition is said to have been "that they speak henceforth to no man *in this name*." (Acts iv. 17.) No one acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament can suppose that the Jews, in making use of this expression, were pointing to Jesus either as a preacher or as a worker of miracles. To the term, used in a second intention, which is here denoted by the emphatic pronoun *this*, they attached a solemn and mysterious meaning, from the days of Moses. The origin of this is plainly set forth in Exodus, (iii. 13,) "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, *What is his name?* what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM That I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you: and God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: *this is my name for ever*, and this is my memorial unto all generations." God commanded Moses to announce to his people, that he had appeared in a new *name;* but God said moreover to him, that he must caution his people, that he was still the same God of their fathers,

Acts iii. 6; ix. 34. temple, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk;" and to Æneas he says, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole;" because in each instance he was proving his credibility as a witness. But when he passes sentence on Ananias and Sapphira, he is acting as minister of the Holy Ghost; and therefore so expresses himself as to imply that their death was a miracle wrought by God the Holy Ghost, for the purpose of proving and vindicating the reality of his agency. "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out." Another act of Christ's preparatory ministry then was, his ordaining an order of men—his apostles—for the special purpose of being witnesses to what he had said and done; and also, qualifying them to become agents and ministers in the new state of religion, which was to commence after his departure.

Acts v. 9.

The Seventy. Luke x. 1. III. Besides this, he had appointed seventy disciples, apparently with the same temporary commission as that with which his apostles were first sent. Perhaps by this time a greater number of missionaries might have been required; or the apostles might have been detained about the person of our Lord, on account of some passages of his life, which rendered their presence necessary as his witnesses, their permanent and peculiar duty. However that may be, the commission of the seventy had expired before the descent of the Holy Ghost; indeed, as far as we can see, immediately on their return to him. Meanwhile they, as well as the apostles, had scattered abroad much instruction, which God's blessed Spirit was sure to render effectual in all honest and good hearts. And although they were found on the descent of the Holy Ghost without any com-

&c. In a subsequent interview Moses was reminded of this in these terms: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, *by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah* was I not known unto them."—Exod. vi. 3.

The expression thus adopted to denote a *new manifestation* of the Godhead, naturally enough became an object of scrupulous veneration to the Israelites. They studiously avoided all mention of the name which denoted God in his new dispensation: a scruple which may be considered as sanctioned by the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Through every successive period of their history the same feeling is recorded. It was the *name* of the Lord that dwelt at Jerusalem, in that *name* the pious are said to walk, his *name* it is which is praised, and in his *name* their enemies are to be destroyed.

When, therefore, the Messiah was foretold, Isaiah had not only used the term Immanuel, but this expression, which to the Jews equally indicated another manifestation of the God of their fathers. The promise is, that "he would give them *a name, an everlasting name;* that they should be called by *a new name;*" and Christ himself is spoken of as one "whose *name* is holy."—Isa. lvi. 5; lxii. 2.

The Jews who attempted to stone him for making himself "equal with God," because he had said, "My Father worketh *hitherto*, and I work," must (with these prophecies before them) have understood him as claiming to be this new manifestation of the Godhead, and applying to himself this additional *name*, under which God was to appear for the purpose of establishing a new dispensation. (John v. 17.) Our form of baptism is an obvious allusion to it, and is equivalent to a command to baptize unto the Father as God, unto the Son as God, and unto the Holy Ghost as God. By this, too, may be explained (what is elsewhere remarked) that our Saviour's command to address prayer to the Father *in his name*, appears to have been fulfilled by the Apostles and early Christians, by addressing their prayers *to the Lord Jesus* See Archbishop Whately's Sermons. Serm. 2.

mission, yet it is highly probable that the first appointments to ministerial offices in the infant Church were made from this class: as from persons already prepared and practised by our Lord in a portion of his ministerial service, and, like the apostles themselves, peculiarly fitted for a second commission from the Holy Ghost. To this number, indeed, tradition has assigned more than one of the primitive worthies of the Church—Barnabas, Stephen, and others.[8]

IV. In addition to these, Christ had left behind him a body of disciples; adherents pledged to the good cause by the sacrament of baptism, and prepared, by the instruction which they had received from him and his apostles, for the Christian truths with which the world was now to be enlightened. Of their number and precise character as a body, there is little to be learned, beyond the fact, that one hundred and twenty were found assembled on the election of Matthias. Some have supposed them to have constituted a peculiar assembly; and consider them to be intended by "the apostles' company," to which Peter and John retired after their appearance before the Sanhedrim. Whether this were so or not, certainly they must have been so far prepared by their admission into the train of our Lord, as to have furnished capable and ready ministers for the Spirit, at that peculiar season when the harvest was greatest and the reapers fewest. Here then was a third order of faithful and experienced men, who, like the apostles and the seventy, were left qualified for a commission from that Comforter whom he had promised.

The other Disciples.

Acts i. 15–26.

Acts iv. 23.

V. The sacraments form another portion of the Christian institution which was embraced by our Lord's preparatory ministry. Their object and character have already been pointed out. Why they were instituted by him, and not, like all the other forms and ceremonies, left to the Holy Spirit, and to the Church under its guidance, is worthy of inquiry. Looking to the character of the apostles as appointed by our Lord, they appear only in the light of witnesses. Is there, then, any thing in the sacraments which rendered these men under that character peculiarly fitting to be trustees, as it were, of those sacred rites? If there be, an answer may be thereby given to the inquiry; the question being always considered with that diffidence and humility, which the wisdom of Christ, in his arrangement of the scheme of salvation, claims from every Christian. Now such a connexion is discoverable. Baptism, first, is the symbol of a covenant between two parties—between the Christian and his Lord. On the part of the Saviour, it was instituted as the means whereby grace was given; and, as a proof of this, in the primitive Church it was always perhaps accompanied by some extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. On the part of the redeemed, it was a pledge that he *believed*. Thus, when the eunuch requested to be baptized

The Sacraments.

Baptism.

[8] Clemen. Alexandr. Strom. Lib. II. p. 410, (ed. Heinsii Lutet. 1629.) Eusebii Hist. Eccl. Lib. I. C. 12; Lib. II. C. 1. Epiph. Hæres. XX. Lib. I.

Acts viii. 37. by Philip, his answer is, "*If thou believest* with all thy heart thou mayest." To the gaoler at Philippi, St. Paul made the same reply, when asked what was the requisite qualification to fit him for Acts xvi. 31. admission into the covenant of salvation; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," (*i.e.* made a Christian.) Baptism then was, on the part of the Christian, the pledge that *he believed*. Now the apostles were the especial witnesses of what was to be believed, they were the persons whose report was to be credited; and to them, therefore, most suitably was committed the sacrament of admission into the Church, "the keys of the kingdom," as to men already intrusted with the password into it. Thus, the appointment of witnesses and the rite of baptism seem to be naturally connected, and to belong to one and the same period of the institution.

The Lord's Supper. The sacrament of the Lord's supper is emphatically termed a memorial. It was enjoined on the apostles, and through them on all Christians, as a symbolical rite to be observed for ever in remembrance of Christ, in remembrance of him especially in his fulfilment of the most important part of his ministry. Being, then, in itself a sort of monument, or histrionic record, of the most mysterious of those events to which they were appointed witnesses, a reason presents itself, why the institution of this sacrament, also, should have been assigned to the same period of the new dispensation, as the appointment of the witnesses themselves. *They* could surely best understand and explain its origin, who were chosen to bear testimony to the event which it was to call to remembrance; and who, if not all present like St. John at the awful scene, were yet present on those various occasions, when it had been prefigured and foretold, by words and by signs, by allusions to mysterious prophecies, by parables, or by typical miracles.

The Lord's Prayer. VI. The Lord's Prayer is another portion of his preparatory ministry. Brief as it is, it is very important. We have in it not only a sanction for *praying together*, but for using *set forms* of common prayer. We learn from it, too, the manner in which we should address ourselves to God, and the nature of the petitions which we should make to Him. Nor is its value as *one of our forms* of *common prayer* inconsiderable. Besides its intrinsic excellence, and the sanctity which attaches to it from having been dictated by Divine wisdom, it derives a peculiar character from the circumstances under which it was composed, and the immediate purpose for which it was composed. It was given at the request of those who were in constant attendance on our Lord, that he would teach them to pray, as Luke xi. 1. John also taught his disciples; meaning obviously, not that they did not know how to pray, but that they desired to have some form of prayer provided for their use, and suitable to their condition as attendants on our Lord. Its immediate purpose was that of a sort of *family prayer*. Having come down to us with this characte

impressed on it, its use is a perpetual reminiscence to us, that we are still brethren, still members of one holy family, although that family has enlarged and spread over the world. The simple wording of the prayer contributes to this effect. To its original character, too, as composed for the use of those who were our Lord's companions while on earth, we may attribute certain omissions which, we may presume, would not have been made, had it been composed originally in reference to the Lord's future Church. There is no mention in it, *e.g.* of the Holy Spirit—*that new Comforter*[9] was not to come until Christ had gone away. The petitions in it are not made in Christ's name, and yet, his promise is, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father *in my name*, he will give it you." Now, supposing this prayer to have been composed for his apostles and disciples, *in the character of his companions and helpers while on earth*, this is exactly what we should expect; for it was not until he should be glorified that prayer was to be made to him, or in his name. Accordingly, when that time was now approaching, he tells his disciples, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and receive." Which amounted to this, "Henceforth ye are to pray in another character and another form. I go to be myself the object of prayer, and even to the Father must prayers be addressed in my name." Look, too, at the first prayers of the Church, and you will observe precisely this change. Take, *e.g.* that before the election of Matthias, "Thou, *Lord*, which knowest the hearts of all men:" or that of Stephen, "*Lord Jesus, receive* my spirit; *Lord*, lay not this sin to their charge." This last is most to the point, because it is obviously an imitation of the prayer which the blessed Jesus made on the cross for his murderers, "Father, forgive them," &c., the precise change to which we have been alluding being adopted. It is not any more, "Our Father," but "Lord Jesus."

John xv 6; xvi. 23.

John xvi. 24.

Acts i. 24.

Acts vii. 59, 60.

Luke xxiii. 34.

[9] "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another* Comforter."—John xiv. 15.

CHAPTER II.

PREACHING TO THE JEWS.

From A.D. 33—41.

SHALL we say, then, that the period of the Christian dispensation, of that dispensation under which we now live, commences where our Lord's ministry closes? Such appears to be the case, that ministry being only preparatory: first, as forming and furnishing the subject of Christianity: secondly, as providing certain instruments, and making certain arrangements to facilitate the first measures of the Holy Spirit, whose office it was to Christianize the world.

The history of that great work naturally falls into a twofold division: the former portion extending through the period in which the Holy Guide and Governor of the Church effected his purpose by a manifest interference; by extraordinary gifts and endowments bestowed on his agents, and an extraordinary and sensible reception, and welcome, as it were, of all, who by their means were introduced into the new kingdom of God. In due season, this manifest and sensible interference of the Holy Spirit was withdrawn, and has continued to be so unto the present day. The history of the latter period will be, therefore, treated separately from that of the former, because of this great line of division. In *that*, the extraordinary display of the Spirit was a necessary guide and beacon to direct men to the Church, and to keep them from wandering in their progress to it. It served a similar purpose with the pillar and cloud, which for a time were manifested to guide the Israelites to the earthly Canaan. In *this*, the kingdom being settled, although the God of the true Israel still resides amongst his people, that residence is secret and invisible—within a holy of holies—within the hearts of the faithful. Like the Jews, we only for a short season enjoyed the open and palpable symbol of God's guiding presence, but, like them, we were not left comfortless. "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man," and through him, and by him, we have access unto God.

Heb. viii. 1, 2.

It is the first of these periods, however, to which our attention must be now confined; that is, to Christianity as it was taught and conducted by the apostles and other *inspired* ministers of God. And here it will be proper to mark distinctly the breaks by which even

this brief period is itself subdivided. For the new dispensation was not communicated to mankind at once, but gradually, and, it would seem, just in proportion as their weak and prejudiced minds could bear it. According to St. Paul's illustration, they were at first fed with milk; and as they gained strength, truths harder of digestion were presented to them. It is quite necessary, therefore, to consider the records of the infant Church with reference to these stages, else we shall be continually startled by apparent inconsistencies: what is the subject of a command in one part, in another appearing, perhaps, as the subject of a prohibition, and what is at one time spoken of as a portion of Christian law, at another being disclaimed and disowned. What indistinctness and confusion, for instance, may be occasioned by the want of some such principle, in attempting to reconcile the decree of the council of Jerusalem, respecting the obligation of Gentile converts to adhere to certain portions of the Jewish ceremonial law, with those passages in St. Paul's writings which expressly condemn such a compliance as sinful!

Some allusion has been already made to this distinction of periods, which will now be more fully pointed out. Three Periods.

I.—THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE JEWS ONLY.

The first instruction of the Holy Ghost was, like that of our Lord, addressed only to the Jews. Of this, the apostles were informed by our Saviour before he left them. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in *Jerusalem*, and in *all Judæa*, and *in Samaria*, and unto the *uttermost part of the earth*." Precisely in this order was the course of their ministry directed. They preached at Jerusalem until Stephen's martyrdom, and the persecution which ensued dispersed the brethren through the rest of Judæa and Samaria, in which places the word was of course next preached. I. Period. Acts i. 8. A.D. 33–41.

II.—THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE DEVOUT GENTILES.

Notwithstanding the frequent allusions of our Lord to this event, notwithstanding his last words respecting the extent of their preaching and witnessing even to the uttermost parts of the earth, the apostles were still as much in the dark on the subject, as they had before been about his death and resurrection, after all his repeated declarations concerning both. As they formerly wondered what the rising from the dead could mean, so they now marvelled, what would be the explanation of the prophecy concerning the call of the Gentiles. II. Period.

Of these Gentiles there were two descriptions; the idolatrous and unbelieving Gentiles, and those who were termed by the Jews

proselytes of the gate. These latter are designated in the New
Acts x 2, 22. Testament as "devout men," "fearing God," "testified of by the Jews." They were those who, in consequence of the dispersion of the Jews through their respective countries, had renounced idolatry, and had become worshippers of the one true God. As a sign and pledge of this change of belief, they conformed to some few observances of the Jewish law. Like the Jews and proselytes of righteousness, they abstained from things offered unto idols, and never used blood as food, or the flesh of any animal strangled, as retaining the blood.[10] In opposition, perhaps, to a very general corruption of the moral perception in this respect, they also bound themselves to consider fornication as an offence against the law of God; and, of course, as such to abstain from it. Other portions of the moral code, being already acknowledged by the Gentiles in common with the Jews, were probably on that account not formally enjoined on them.

Next in order to the Jews, it was reasonable that the Gospel should be preached to these, both as being better prepared than the idolaters to receive it, and also because the prejudices of the Jewish converts were less likely to be startled, than if all Gentiles had been at once called. For, if the apostles themselves were at first unable to bear this hard truth, what may we suppose to have been the case with the great mass of Christians? The event, indeed, fully justifies the wisdom of God in this gradual disclosure of his scheme. Although it was not until the seventh year of the Holy Spirit's descent, that any steps were taken for the admission even of the devout Gentiles, yet it was necessary to prepare one apostle especially for the opening of this commission; and this, too, after having so frequently exercised him by divine impulses, as to render him of all others the least liable to mistake, or to distrust its suggestions, and the rest more likely, from the conspicuous part he had taken, to confide now in his assurance. Even at this late period, then, it was necessary that the Gentile Cornelius, although a man who "feared
Acts x. 2. God and all his house," and could appeal for his character to the Jews themselves, should be emboldened by a special revelation to seek for admission into the Church; and that Peter, by a corresponding vision, should be required to lay aside his scruples, and be taught then for the first time to see, that God having cleansed the Gentiles, they were to be received on a footing with the clean and holy Israelites. The pains which he was at to justify his conduct to the Church of Jerusalem, and the opposition which he subsequently encountered, prove the delicate nature of his commission, and the need of some extraordinary and special interference of the Holy Ghost to enforce it. The time which elapsed from the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost to the conversion of

[10] Miscellanea Sacra;—Essay on the Decree.

Cornelius, forms what may be termed the first period in the dispensation of the Spirit. From this, again, to the further extension of the Gospel kingdom, forms a second distinct period, extending from A.D. 41 to A.D. 45. A.D. 41–45.

III.—THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE IDOLATROUS GENTILES.

At that time Paul and Barnabas were called on by a special revelation to undertake an extension of spiritual conquest and dominion, far beyond that with which Peter had been commissioned. It was then seen that the fulness of the time was come for the offer of salvation to the Gentile idolaters. What preparation Barnabas had for this great attempt, we are not informed. It is only said, that he was a "good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." But of St. Paul, as of St. Peter, a special and distinct revelation is recorded: one, indeed, more solemn and mysterious, because involving what he describes as "the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men," whereof he was made minister. This was the dispensation of the grace of God which was given unto him, and for a right view of which he was taken up into the third heaven. III. Period. Acts xiii. 1—3. Acts xi. 24. Eph. iii. 5. 2 Cor. xii. 2.

That his apostleship to the Gentiles was conferred on him in his second visit to Jerusalem, and by the revelation which he describes as having then received in the temple, is evident from the terms of the command addressed to him, "Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for *they* will not receive *thy testimony* concerning me:" and again, "Depart, for I will send thee *far hence* to the Gentiles," "delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, *unto whom now I send thee;* to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" allusions which are manifestly applicable to the idolatrous Gentiles only. For, as to the devout Gentiles, Peter, and Paul himself, had for many years been preaching to them; nor could they be said so properly to be in darkness and under the power of Satan. His appointment, in conjunction with Barnabas, by the Church of Antioch, took place not long after, and, as we know, by the especial command of the Holy Ghost. Acts xxii. 18, 21. Acts xxvi. 17, 18.

From this time the ministry of the Spirit appears to have been directed to three distinct orders of persons; each of which required some slight difference of discipline and government, although the doctrines of Christianity were alike imparted to all. The Jews compose the first, whether Jews by birth or proselytism. To these, and it would seem to these alone, ministered all the apostles, except Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, who had also special commissions. The second are the devout Gentiles, who were first intrusted to the ministry of Peter, and afterwards included in Paul's charge also.

The last are the idolatrous Gentiles, to whom Paul and Barnabas alone of all the apostles were sent, but more especially, as it would seem from the memoirs of their labours, Paul.

This stage in the administration of the Spirit will be found to comprehend a period of twenty-five years, extending from A.D. 45, when St. Paul received his apostleship, to A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was taken, the Jewish polity dissolved, and the grounds on which the above-mentioned distinctions were founded were for ever removed.

A.D. 45–70.

THE APPOINTMENT OF MATTHIAS TO BE AN APOSTLE.

Acts i. 26.

Between the ascension of our Lord and the coming of the Comforter, a short interval of ten days occurs, during which the only measure taken for the furtherance of Christianity was the election of an apostle in the room of Judas. This pause in the work of God may have been intended to mark more strongly the distinction, between the former and latter ministration—that of Jesus, which was now completed, and that of the Comforter, which was to succeed. That this intermission was not accidental, at least, but part of the general scheme of Providence, was expressly declared to the disciples by their Master. They remained inactive by his command.

Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4.

This interval, then, was only marked by the repair of that portion of the Church's preparatory structure which had been injured by the fall of Judas. An apostle was wanting to complete "the twelve," as they were emphatically styled. Peter accordingly proposed to his fellow apostles and the other disciples, (who, to the number of one hundred and twenty men, were collected in an upper room, for fear of the Jews,) the expediency—or shall we rather say, he explained to them, that it was the will of Heaven?—that another disciple should supply the vacancy. As yet, it must be borne in mind, of the two offices of an apostle, that only with which they had been invested by Christ was known. As yet they were only witnesses, or, as they are often called, in allusion to the most material circumstance in their evidence, "witnesses of the resurrection." Two, therefore, qualified for this office by their constant attendance on the Lord, were presented as candidates; and the choice fell on Matthias in preference to Joseph, who was surnamed Barsabas.

Acts i. 8, 22.

Mode of Election.

The mode in which this election was conducted has not been viewed in the same light by all, the sacred narrative admitting, certainly, great variety of interpretation. Mosheim supposes that the election was made by the suffrages of the assembled Christians, the apostles having previously nominated the candidates.[11] Others understand the nomination to have been made by the assembly, and the decision by the rival candidates drawing lots. This latter, which is the more usual view of it, seems also, on a careful consideration of all the circumstances, to be the true one. For,

[11] De Rebus Christianorum ante Const. Magn. p. 78.

First, the election is expressly referred to the Lord, who had himself appointed all the other apostles, and who, even after the dispensation of the Spirit had commenced, manifested himself when a further apostolic appointment was to be made. They prayed and said, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two *thou hast chosen.*" Add to this, that the assembly was not inspired, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, and therefore could not know what was the Divine will and pleasure. Mosheim's conjecture throughout proceeds on a forgetfulness of this circumstance, which makes this so materially to differ from any congregation of primitive Christians assembled after the descent of the Spirit. Whether the apostles or the assembly proposed the two candidates—a point which the narrative leaves doubtful—cannot with this view of the case, then, be of any moment.[12] Acts i. 24.

Another still more cogent reason there is for considering the question of the nomination immaterial, as to any argument which may be founded on it respecting the constitution of the primitive assemblies. *The rule was laid down*, according to which the qualification for a candidate was to be ascertained. So that whether the expression "they appointed" (ἔστησαν) refers to the apostles, or to the whole assembly, it seems certain, that they did no more than ascertain who, out of all then present, possessed the great qualification for an apostle,—the claim of having been constantly in attendance on the Lord from his baptism until his death. What if Matthias and Barsabas were the only two of that whole assembly who, besides the apostles, were so circumstanced? This is indeed extremely probable. First, because the number of those who had been constantly with Jesus from the very beginning of his ministry could not have been very great. Secondly, because those few, being from that very circumstance more known and marked by the Jews, and more certainly obnoxious to persecution, would be the most

[12] The terms of the narrative strongly favour the popular opinion and militate against Mosheim's; notwithstanding his proposed accommodation of the text to his view. In the phrase, ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτῶν he reads αὐτῶν. But the chief obstacle lies not here, but in the construction of the sentence contained in ver. 26. In our translation it is, "The lot fell on Matthias, *and* he was numbered with the eleven." The meaning of the former part of the sentence in the original is more properly, perhaps, "the office fell to Matthias." But this does not affect the point to which I am adverting, which is, that the two acts are given as separate. First comes the choice or election of Matthias, and then his being numbered with the eleven. Now the Greek word, which has been rendered "numbered with," is συγκατεψηφίσθη: a word which expresses the act of an assembly, and that by vote, ψῆφος. Is it not, then, natural to conclude that St. Luke meant to say, that Matthias having been first chosen by the Lord's extraordinary interference, the assembly *joined in* or *followed* up the election, (for that is the force of the σὺν in συγκατεψηφίσθη)? Their proceeding with certain *forms* after the election had taken place, no more implied that they were the *electors*, than the usage of the Holy Ghost's descent after baptism, authorizes us to explain away the account of Cornelius's baptism, because in this instance it preceded it. A case directly in point is that of St. Paul, who was, like Matthias, an apostle especially appointed "by the will of God and not of man;" yet it was, doubtless, after that appointment that he was invested with the office by the Church of Antioch, and by prayer and imposition of hands commended to the grace of God.

likely to flee and disperse on the crucifixion of Jesus so far, as not yet to have returned to their little society. The apostles (independently of that very constancy which might have qualified them for the office) were detained by an extraordinary sense of duty, by affection, and by other motives which could not so forcibly operate on the rest. Supposing then that two only were found, these two had given proof of possessing, beyond the qualification mentioned by Peter, a superior constancy, faithfulness, and disregard of personal risk, which were qualities equally essential to the office which was to be filled. Of these, then, Matthias was chosen and Joseph left. But both would seem to have been tried and proved for the situation. And if the general report of the early Church be true, Joseph indeed was only rejected for a season. Barnabas, the fellow-labourer and fellow-apostle of Paul, has been commonly identified with this same Joseph, who was also called Barsabas.[13] Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that tradition highly likely to be true, which states, that of all who were competent witnesses besides the eleven, the only two who gave proof of apostolical faithfulness and fearlessness became advanced to the rank and office of apostles,—the one supplying a vacancy in the number of those more especially sent to the Jews, the other joined in a commission to the Gentiles.

It appears, then, that this interruption in the Sabbath time, as it were, of God's great work, the interval between the ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Ghost, was not properly a continuance of that work, but only the repair of what was broken by the sin and death of Judas. And it was appointed, perhaps, that the election of Matthias should take place in this interval, in order that the Holy Ghost might on the day of Pentecost fall on him with the same effects as on the other apostles; they, as will appear in the sequel, being affected by the descent of the Spirit differently from the great body of Christians.

DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST, (A.D. 33.)

Acts ii.

The descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost naturally leads us to call to mind the object and design of that holyday among the Jews, presuming, that as their passover contained so much instructive allusion to the death of Christ, we may learn from this also a similar lesson respecting the descent of the Comforter.

Analogy between certain Jewish and Christian Festivals.

Fifty days from the paschal sacrifice was the feast of Pentecost: the same period intervened from the sacrifice of Christ to the descent of the Holy Ghost. In the former, the rite of the Passover reminded the observers of a temporal salvation and deliverance; the feast of Pentecost, of the law given to those so rescued and saved by God himself speaking from Mount Sinai. Christ had been the new and

Exod. xxiii. 15, 16.

13 The name by which Barsabas commonly went was *Justus*, i.e. *upright*; and in the eleventh chapter of the Acts, ver. 24, there is a corresponding *description* of Barnabas's character.

the true Passover, and, in like manner and after a like interval, our Passover was followed up by the promulgation of a new law, delivered also by God himself.

By means of this contrast, we may see more clearly the distinction which has been drawn between the ministry of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit. With the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai commenced the Mosaic dispensation; with the Christian Pentecost that under which we now live. In each case, all that preceded was *preparatory;* the signs, miracles, and other acts which authenticated the commission of Moses, and those which bore witness to that greater Prophet who "arose like unto him;" the blood of the lamb which saved the Israelites from the destroyer, as well as the sacrifice of Him who by his blood has saved us all from destruction.[14]

Deut. xviii. 15—18; Acts iii. 22.

With the records of that day the Christian reader needs not to be instructed here; nor does it enter into my plan, on this or any other part of the inspired history, to attempt a substitute for the narratives of the Bible. I am only like the travellers' guide, pointing out the remarkable features of a venerable portrait, and placing the observer in the most favourable light for seeing them, and not making sketches or copies for persons who want the opportunity or the inclination frequently to visit the original. This kind of assistance, however, the present occasion more especially requires. For the history of Christianity being the history of the dispensation of God's Spirit, it is proper that, together with the notice of the Holy Ghost's first manifestation as the guide and dispenser of religion, there should be given whatever hints may seem useful to show the connexion between the incidents recorded in that history, and the guiding wisdom of that Holy One,—in other words, to clear away all that might hinder the events preserved in the Scriptures from being contemplated as parts of the scheme of the Divine Dispenser, and that scheme itself from appearing fully adapted to the purposes for which it was framed, and which it has so signally answered. The first point to which with this view I would advert, is,

Modes of dispensing the Spirit

I. *The distinction between the modes whereby the Holy Ghost was communicated, and its effects manifested on the members of the primitive Church.* Now this was done in two ways; either, as in this first instance, *immediately and visibly,* or *by the laying on of the apostles' hands,* when the communication was *secret* and *invisible.*

Immediate and visible.

In the former case, a flame, shaped like a tongue, was seen to descend, and rest on the persons so favoured, and the descent is therefore said to be *visible,* that is, *accompanied with a visible* sign.

[14] As if to impress the importance of the analogy on our attention, we are not simply told that the descent of the Holy Ghost took place on the day of Pentecost, for then might the reader have overlooked the coincidence as casual; but the narrative is prefaced in a pointed and particular way, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come;' and thence St. Luke proceeds to detail the glorious and gracious manifestation of the Spirit, in this solemn entrance on its office.

John i. 18; 1 John iv. 12.

For God himself no man hath seen at any time; and these fiery tongues, like the flame in the bush at Horeb, and that of the Shechinah, only denoted a *peculiar character* in the several communications which were accompanied by such tokens. Simple and obvious as is this view of the subject, it is requisite to keep it distinctly before us, because much confusion of thought, not to say impiety of doctrine, may result from mistaking the various modes in which it has pleased God to provide an intercourse between himself and his creatures, for views of his real nature.

Thus, when it is written that God appeared to Moses in the bush our first unthinking apprehension may be, that *an object of sight* before *invisible*, was then *made visible*. But then, a moment's reflection reminds us, that "no man hath seen God at any time;" and we learn to consider the expression as an accommodation of language, like "the wrath of God," "the counsels of God," and even the "eye" and the "arm" of the Lord.[15] On the other hand if we chance to overlook this, it is impossible to say how far we may go wrong. To return, however, to the immediate point of inquiry.

The descent of the Holy Ghost, when accompanied with this sign must have been what our Saviour meant when he spoke to the apostles of being baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost. It was manifested only on some great occasion; and appears to have produced effects, if not always greater in kind, certainly greater in degree, than when the communication was made through the mediation of the apostles. Those who were thus favoured, were, by way of distinction from the others, said to be "filled with the Holy Ghost," and probably, from their superior spiritual endowments formed the class out of which all elections were made to the higher offices in the Church. It was so *e.g.* in the case of the Seven whose appointment is recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts, and in that of Barnabas. Through this "baptism" all the apostles (unless we are to except St. Paul,) passed; and by virtue of it they certainly obtained gifts greater, not in degree only, but in kind, as we shall presently observe.

Three occasions on which the Holy Ghost manifestly descended. Acts ii. 1.

Acts. x. 45.

There are only three occasions on which it is expressly recorded that the Holy Ghost was thus communicated, and in each there was some great object to be effected, some signal event to be marked. First, it occurred on the day of Pentecost. Next, on the return of the apostles from the Jewish council to their brethren.[16] The third occasion was the admission of the first devout Gentiles or proselytes of the gate unto the Church.

An ingenious writer, to whom I have more than once had occasion to acknowledge my obligations,[17] maintained, that the Holy Ghost was thus communicated on two other occasions. On the first conversion of the idolatrous Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, and on the

[15] See Apb. King's Sermon on Predestination.

[16] τοῖς ἰδίοις, Acts iv. 31.

[17] Barrington's Miscel. Sacra, Essay II.

appointment of St. Paul to the apostleship. The scriptural expressions, however, on which he rests his assertion,[18] do not prove it; nor would he, probably, have put any such interpretation on them had it not been suggested, in the one case by the analogy between the third extension of the Gospel kingdom, and the two which preceded it; and, in the other, by a wish to make St. Paul's case more completely analogous to that of the original apostles. Possibly, the case might have been as he supposes; and had we scriptural warrant for it, we should doubtless feel that there was a fitness in its being so; but we have not.

Insensible communication of the Spirit.

On all other occasions, the descent of the Holy Ghost was such as our Lord alluded to, when he said to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John iii. 8. In other words, its operation was not accompanied by any impression on the senses. It was known only *by its effects*. But, the effects themselves being partly sensible and extraordinary, it was still in one sense a palpable communication. The apostles laid their hands on the disciples, and the Holy Ghost was given. The gifts which followed in this, as in the former case, were various, and imparted in different degrees, as will be more distinctly pointed out as we proceed. It does not appear, however, to have been attended with all the effects or gifts of the Spirit; as, for instance, the power of conferring the Holy Ghost, which was confined to the apostles, and therefore conveyed by the former manifestation of the Comforter. The gifts which it did convey were probably, too, imparted in a lower degree.

This communication of the Spirit appears to have been dispensed indiscriminately to all believers. All who were baptized, either at the time of their baptism, or as soon afterwards as an opportunity offered, were favoured through the apostles with "some spiritual gift." Hence the desire so earnestly expressed by St. Paul, to be with the Romans, in order to impart to them this their right and privilege.[19] The members of the Roman Church had been baptized, but not by an apostle; and had as yet therefore no opportunity of

[18] "*Being filled with the Holy Ghost*," and the like. St. Luke seems to apply the phrase to cases wherein *immediate utterance* was the result—to the *overflowings*, as it were, of the Spirit. In like manner heathen writers use the expression, *plenus deo*. Accordingly, whilst in the Acts it is confined (as it would seem) to the instances of the Holy Ghost's descent which were marked by the symbol of fiery tongues, and the gift of languages, which it typified, in the Gospel, it is applied to Zacharias, whose inspiration was manifested by an extemporaneous and divinely suggested hymn. So too John Baptist is said to have been filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, to denote, by the strong expression, what is elsewhere described by "*a voice crying out*, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

[19] "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, *to the end that ye may be established*." (Rom. i. 11.) Many other texts of Scripture may be added, in confirmation of this view, *e.g.* the same apostle, in Eph. i. 13, 14, speaks *generally* of believers, that they "were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance." St. John's words are still more applicable: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath *given* us of his Spirit."—1 John iv. 13.

receiving this seal of their baptism—this evidence, which it was thought good to grant to every member of the early Church, to satisfy him that he was indeed a portion of that edifice which was the temple of the Holy Ghost—that the descent of the Spirit, the natural, ordinary, and proper descent, was real, although insensible. So to the Israelites, the pillar of fire, and the flame of the Shechinah, were long left visible even to all, until a belief in the Divine presence amongst them had been not only proved as an object of faith, but familiarized into an habitual impression.

Gifts thereby conferred.

1 Cor. xii. 4—10.

Various terms occur in the New Testament, expressive of the offices and powers with which the Holy Spirit thus invested the members of the primitive Church. We read of the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, of prophecy, discerning of spirits, the utterance and the interpretation of languages, besides teaching, faith, and several other names which served the temporary purpose of marking a minute subdivision of ministerial qualifications, which it would be impossible, as it is unnecessary, for us now to ascertain.

Advantages of their enumeration.

To a certain extent, however, this enumeration of gifts is not unedifying to succeeding ages. In the number of persons gifted, and still more, perhaps, in the distribution of endowments, we are presented at least with a fact, which makes it morally impossible that the inspired persons could either have imposed on themselves or on others. When enthusiasm and fanaticism spread themselves, the symptoms are uniform. That morbid sympathy, which is, as it were, the moral conductor of the delusion, requires that it should be so. One man's pretension to "discern spirits," may act on the heated imagination of another, until that other supposes that he too is endowed with the same faculty; but this would never lead him to fancy himself learned in a foreign language. On considering the manner, too, in which the various terms are used, together with their previous and ordinary import, we are not a little guided in our view of the economy of the Christian society, during this interesting period of its incompleteness and infancy, and are enabled to distinguish the characteristic endowments of those at least who held the highest rank. Some occasional use will accordingly be made of this source of information. The word of wisdom, for instance, may be fairly interpreted to mean, that insight into the true import of Christ's ministry which it pertained to the apostles more especially to possess, and which, as was before observed, they were without, until they received it of the Spirit. Such an interpretation is fair and reasonable; because St. Paul speaks of it as "the hidden wisdom," as if to intimate, that it comprised things either not before revealed, or not so revealed as to be at the time comprehended. One of these points, and the most remarkable, is called, by the same apostle, "the wisdom of God." "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, but unto them which are called, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Again, there

1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

can be little doubt that "the word of knowledge" was an expression used to denote sacred lore—knowledge of the scheme of past revelations recorded in Scripture, their reference to Christianity, and, perhaps, their connexion and extension through futurity, such as appears in the Revelations of St. John. This gift is accordingly described, both as unlocking the Scriptures of the prophets, wherein was "the mystery that was kept from ages, but was then made manifest," and also as that whereby the ancient prophets had foreseen this mystery. Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Col. i. 26.

Without pursuing these remarks further, it may be sufficient to observe, that these two gifts of wisdom and of knowledge seem to have been peculiar to the apostles, and to have been distinguished, the former from teaching, the latter from prophecy, on this very account; the apostles possessing so much clearer views of Christ's ministry and of the future state of the Church, as to entitle their endowments to names distinct from teaching and prophecy.

Descent on the day of Pentecost.

The event which suggested these remarks was the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, filling the apostles and their company each with his proper gifts. This then being the first, not only of the three manifestations of the Spirit, but of all its manifestations as guide and Comforter, the propriety of a visible and symbolical descent is easily perceived. It has been already observed, that the office of apostle was twofold: first, he had an appointment from Christ as his witness; secondly, he was ordained by the Holy Ghost as minister of the word—expounder and preacher of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. In his former capacity, he bore testimony to *facts*, which he was qualified to do, whether he understood the import of those facts or not. In his second office, he became also an expounder of the *true character* of those facts. To qualify the apostles for the former, it was requisite, for their own satisfaction, that they should be in constant attendance on the Lord;[20] for that of others, that they should possess the power of working miracles. Both these qualifications, therefore, they derived from our Lord himself. At his command they left all and followed him while on earth, and before his departure received the power of performing signs and wonders. Still, as the office of *testifying* was not to begin until the new dispensation was opened by the Spirit, they were commanded to wait for that event. So that the first descent of the Holy Ghost appears to have been made in its most illustrious and striking form, first as a sign that that great

[20] What good end was probably attained, by qualifying them to be witnesses of the facts before they were even moderately acquainted with the doctrines depending on them? The question may be partly answered, by considering how important it was that the apostles should not begin to preach Christianity too soon. With this object in view, whenever our Lord was more than usually explicit with them or with others, his disclosure was accompanied with a charge "that they should tell no man."—Matt. xvi. 20; xvii. 9; Mark viii. 30; ix. 9.

period was come, and next for the purpose of ordaining the apostles as the chief ministers of the Spirit.

From this period the apostles and their fellow-labourers appear
Acts ii. 41. in their full course of duty. On a single address from Peter, three thousand were converted, baptized, and gifted with the Holy Ghost, and thereby admitted to the constant instruction of the apostles, and the communion of the Church. These religious duties were performed in private houses,[21] and by them as *Christians*. Nevertheless, as *Jewish* citizens they continued to frequent the temple. Thus

21 Κατ' οἶκον, as opposed to the temple service, of which mention is made immediately after.

The expression, taken in connexion with the existing circumstances of the Church, may however imply more, as the following considerations show. At this time the believers were more in number than three thousand, and besides the regular increase which was going on from day to day, about five thousand were shortly after added at once. Now it is impossible that any one private house (and those of the Christians must have been among the humblest) could have had an upper room, or any place within its precincts, capable of containing so large a number. And if any such house there were, still it is equally difficult to understand how such a crowd of suspected persons should have been allowed, in the irritable state of the Jewish antichristian spirit, to assemble thus regularly for prayer and other Christian intercourse.

Is it not likely, or rather certain, that the Church almost from the first must have been divided into several congregations? If so, each must have had one at least to preside, and also some one place of worship.

This supposition furnishes a key to many expressions of the New Testament, some of which are of no very obvious import. St. Paul is said before his conversion to have gone κατὰ τοὺς οἴκους, haling men and women to prison. Now, where was an inquisitor so likely to go in search of Christians, as into their ordinary places of meeting? and what would more naturally express these than the term τοὺς οἴκους, *the* houses, *i.e.* the houses of prayer? St. Paul sends to the Corinthians the salutation of Aquila and Priscilla, and of "the Church which is in their *house*." May it not here too be meant that theirs was a house so used, that it served the purpose of a church, and was appropriated to a particular congregation? Similar expressions, suggesting the same interpretation, will readily occur to the reader of the New Testament.

But, now, if this be so, what shall be said of the assembly of the whole Church, such as took place at Jerusalem when the famous decree was issued? Supposing such an assembly to have been held *sub dio*, (for no private room could have contained them,) still it is almost absurd to suppose that their meeting would have been allowed to proceed without molestation; and the more public we suppose such a meeting to be rendered, from the numbers composing it, the greater the difficulty.

One solution naturally presents itself, Why may not some one order in the Church have been called the Church, κατ' ἐξοχὴν—have conducted the internal affairs of the whole society of which they were a part—have represented it in its intercourse with other Churches? Perhaps each presiding elder took the sense of his own congregation, and then the matter in question was decided by a meeting of these elders and the apostles. The apostles themselves might either have belonged to some one privileged congregation, such as the original one hundred and twenty, or have been divided. The latter is the more probable. Peter and John are said to have returned after their release from prison εἰς τοὺς ἰδίους, and perhaps their preaching together may have arisen from this very circumstance, that they were attached to the same congregation.

But again, if the assemblies of the primitive Christians were held in separate houses, what shall we say of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the return of Peter and John from the Sanhedrim? Was it a partial favour, and not extended to the whole Church? This follows necessarily, and is in itself not unlikely. A particular manifestation of God's Spirit, in which the endowments conferred were of a superior kind, was likely to be limited. Certainly, the term τοὺς ἰδίους, which is used to denote the congregation to which they returned, seems to imply a particular class of Christians. Those who consider it to have been formed out of the original one hundred and twenty, will see an obvious reason for the privilege in the circumstance, that they were fellow-labourers with the apostles and fellow-disciples of the Lord Jesus himself. At all events, it would be nothing strange, that this sign should be given only to that congregation to which those apostles were attached whose ministry was the occasion of it.

Peter and John, when they wrought the celebrated miracle on the man lame from his birth, did it as they were entering the beautiful gate at the hour of prayer. This and other instances, which will occur to the reader of the history of the apostles, clearly show that, for a time, that is, as long as Jerusalem and the Jewish polity remained, Jewish converts generally conformed to the ceremonials of the law; not indeed as *Christians*, but agreeably to the spirit of Christianity, which interfered not with national or other institutions, further than they were incompatible with the Gospel faith and practice. The Jew remained, as far as regarded conformity to the customs and habits of his country, still a Jew, even after his conversion. The devout Gentile, likewise, although received into the Christian society, was still not only permitted but enjoined to retain his customs as proselyte of the gate, and as such to abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood. The converted idolater, on the other hand, was left free to eat of meat offered to idols, and to violate also the mere ceremonial parts of God's superseded dispensation. To have attached any spiritual grace to these ordinances would, indeed, in the Jewish convert have been a sin, and was forbidden; to have sought a fuller participation in the Jewish ceremonies and ritual communion, under an idea that they could render "the comers thereunto perfect," would have been equally sinful in the converted proselyte of the gate; and the converted idolater also, although free to eat of meat offered to idols, and, in short, to enjoy from the first the full "liberty" of the Gospel of Christ, sinned, if there were so much of the taint of old superstition remaining on his mind, as to make him feel, that while he eat and associated with the revellers, an evil being was receiving his homage—or that while he was indulging in any act, indifferent and innocent in itself, it was too strongly associated in his mind with guilty meaning, to be indifferent and innocent *to him*. Regard to the feelings of weaker and more scrupulous brethren might in some instances render more restraint requisite, but these were the main clauses of the character of Christian liberty, as it stood before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Acts iii. 1.

Acts xv. 20.

Heb. x. 1.

1 Cor. viii. 7

SECOND EXTRAORDINARY MANIFESTATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The wonderful success of Peter's first address, and the effect of the miracle which had been wrought by the hands of John and himself, soon aroused the attention of the Jewish rulers. The cripple whose limbs had been restored, clinging to the apostles, detained them as they were proceeding to join the public service, while the people as they arrived for the same purpose flocked round and formed a crowd. The high priest and chief police officer, hearing the disturbance, came out; and, assisted by the Sadducees, seized the persons who appeared to them to be the cause of all the tumult and interruption of the public worship. Peter was already

Peter heals the lame man. Acts iii. and iv. 1—33.

far advanced in a harangue, in which, as in the last, he was fulfilling his office of witness, and inviting his countrymen to baptism in the name of Jesus, when John and himself were arrested and imprisoned. Next morning they were brought before the rulers and elders, who had assembled at Jerusalem for examination of the culprits. The man whose lameness had been removed was in attendance, and his evidence secured them from the charge of imposture. But the influence which their doctrine was gaining, was more alarming to the council than any crime which could have been laid to their charge. Three thousand converts had been made by their first appeal; by this second, notwithstanding the interruption, five thousand more were added: and in the interval no day had passed without the Holy Spirit giving proof of Divine power and care, in bringing those qualified into the Church. They were dismissed therefore from the council, with repeated warnings, that if they continued to preach "as witnesses of Jesus," they did it at their peril. It was on their return to their party, and while all were engaged in prayer and thanksgiving, that the symbol of the Spirit's communication was recognised, and his second descent was manifested.

Acts iv. 31.

An extraordinary display on this occasion was obviously in unison with the rest of that Divine Person's ministry. Thus it fell on the first devout Gentile converts. Thus it fell also (as we have endeavoured to prove) at Antioch in Pisidia, on the first idolaters who embraced Christianity. The first-fruits of the Jewish conversion would naturally seem to require a corresponding blessing and honouring of the Spirit.

Effects upon Barnabas.

Of those on whom this descent of the Comforter (τοῦ Παρακλήτου) produced the most striking effects, Barnabas was so conspicuous as to derive his familiar name from the circumstance, (υἱὸς παρακλήσεως,) and to deserve especial notice from the brief historian of the event. Beyond the gifts bestowed on the rest, perhaps, he then received the full endowments of an apostle, and was thenceforth qualified for the occasion when he was called on to act as one, in conjunction with St. Paul. That his qualifications as a witness had been already ascertained, was suggested as probable in the remarks on Matthias's election. In the present instance, the application of that singular title to him, "the son of consolation"—the record too of certain little circumstances in his history, such as that he was a Levite—of a Cyprian family—all seem to denote that something had at this time occurred, and was alluded to respecting him, which was important in the history of the Church—something which distinguished him from the number of those who, no less than he, sold their possessions, and laid the money at the apostles' feet. The interpretation subjoined to the word Barnabas explains this, and serves perhaps to point out, what is not elsewhere alluded to, the time and occasion of his inspiration and appointment as an apostle.

Acts iv. 36.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

Among those who, like Barnabas, converted their possessions into money, and placed the amount at the disposal of the apostles, appeared Ananias and his wife Sapphira. They, however, are said to have "kept back part of the price," and thereby to have "lied to the Holy Ghost." For which crime the Spirit of God, as if to vindicate his authority as ruler in the new dispensation, smote them publicly and separately with death. Acts v.

As their case involves two interesting questions, in the solution of which all are not agreed, it may be as well to pause, and to consider the incident with reference to both of these inquiries. The one is, the community of goods among the primitive Christians; the other, the sin against the Holy Ghost. As the two subjects are by this event accidentally thrown together, so by their concurrence they seem to illustrate and explain each other.

Community of Goods among the Primitive Christians.

Many commentators and ecclesiastical writers have represented this community of goods as implying a literal resignation of all private and individual property,—each surrendering his all to the public, and all receiving from the common stock what was requisite for their support. What end would have been gained by this, it is not easy to understand; and to meet the question concerning its inutility, and also its impracticability, it has been conjectured, that the custom was, from certain peculiar circumstances, rendered necessary in the Church of Jerusalem, but did not extend to other Churches. But that such was not the custom, even of the Church at Jerusalem, may be proved from this very instance. For Peter expressly reminds Ananias, that he had no temptation to commit this crime of falsehood, inasmuch as he was not called on, merely as a member of the Christian society, to sell his property, or, if sold, to bestow any of it on the Church. "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" The Thirty-eighth Article of the Church of England, in opposition to the mischievous tenets of the early anabaptists, merely disavows the obligation of Christians, as such, to surrender their property to the Church, without adopting (as was indeed uncalled for) any explanation of the primitive custom. The difficulty, however, under which the ordinary view of it laboured, has not escaped notice. Mosheim accordingly attempts to prove, that St. Luke's account implies a community of *use*, and not of *possession*,—that the supply of what was needed by the society and by individuals, was *acknowledged* by all as a bounden duty, and unanimously complied with.[22] But here, again, the case of Ananias, of Barnabas, and of others similarly circumstanced proves, that from whatever motive they contributed, they resigned not a part, but *all*

[22] Dissertationes ad Hist. Eccles. Pert. Vol. II. p. 14.

of their property. Else, wherein the offence of Ananias? The following suggestion, then, may perhaps be more satisfactory.

Explained. Nothing is more certain than that the ministers of the word, including the apostles, were maintained out of this public purse. If some, like St. Paul, relieved it by daily labour, his own words prove that they were not required to do so. And why were they thus maintained? Because, no doubt, *they* had, in strict conformity with our Lord's words, forsaken lands, houses, and all their goods for his sake, for his service. "Sell all that thou hast, and follow me," may perhaps aptly describe the first qualification of one who was to have, for the most part, no certain abode, and whose time and attention were necessarily to be withdrawn from the pursuits of gain, and even from the ordinary cares for the morrow. From the character, then, in which the original preachers of Christianity present themselves to our notice, from the promise of our Lord to those "who should forsake lands, houses, &c. for his sake and the Gospel," and from the fact, that they all did receive support from the public fund—from these circumstances taken together, does it not seem likely, that a resignation of all individual and separate property into the apostles' hands, was the first step taken by those who devoted themselves to the ministry?—the pledge, that they, having now forsaken all, were ready to follow the standard of the Cross? On this pledge, perhaps, then, they were put into office by the apostles, their other qualifications having been at the same time ascertained by the power of discerning spirits.[23]

Matt. xix. 21; Mark x. 21; Luke xviii. 22.

Luke xviii. 29, 30.

One remark there is, certainly, in St. Luke's account, which may be considered by some to stand in the way of this suggestion. He states, that on the second manifestation of the Holy Ghost, "*all* who had lands and houses sold them, and brought in the amount." But, when we remember the prophetic exclamation of the Psalmist, "The Lord spake, and great was the company of the preachers," and consider how many were required now for the dispersion of the faith, this, in a *society of poor men*, cannot imply a very disproportionate number. Add to this, that the statement of their bringing in their money to the apostles, by no means implies that it was in all instances accepted. In the general excitement, produced by two rapidly successive manifestations of the Holy Ghost and of its gifts,

Ps. lxviii. 11.

[23] There is a passage in Eusebius's history, (Lib. III. C. 137,) which certainly seems to confirm this suggestion. Adverting to the fact, that in the first days of Christianity, a great portion of the converts became themselves preachers and ministers of the word, he expressly mentions, as a preparatory step, the resignation of their property for the relief of the poor, τὴν σωτήριον ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ἀπεπλήρουν παρακέλευσιν, ἐνδεέσι νέμοντες τὰς οὐσίας· ΕΠΕΙΤΑ ΔΕ ἀποδημίας στελλομένοι ἔργον ἐπετελοῦν εὐαγγελιστῶν. Again in discussing the question, whether the Therapeutæ were Christians, (Lib. II. C. 17,) he argues in favour of their being so, from the existence of such a custom amongst them, and, appealing to this very passage of the Acts, asserts that it was practised in one period of the Church. That the custom should require this kind of notice by the historian, at the close of the third century, proves, however, that it was soon abandoned. The temptation to employ spiritual talents for worldly advantage, might have created an expediency and need for the rule, which would only last during the inspired age.

all may have rushed eagerly to claim employment in a service so evidently Divine, and so gloriously sanctioned by God. All who had property would naturally have thrown it up, as a pledge that they were ready to be employed, leaving the apostles and the Holy Spirit who guided them to decide whether the offer of themselves would be accepted.

Sin against the Holy Ghost.

So considering the matter, the crime of Ananias and Sapphira assumes a very peculiar character. They sought to obtain the office of ministry, and the spiritual gifts and privileges attached to it, under a false pretence. The pledge which they gave, in offering, as their all, only a portion of their property, to the apostles,—the agents of God the Holy Ghost,—was a bold test applied to the omniscience of God in his present government of the Church, a practical lie unto the God of truth. Theirs was not a *negative* but a *positive* offence against the Holy Spirit; not, like other sins, an act of *disobedience*, but one of *aggression*; and as such perhaps falling under that denomination, of which Christ had said, that they should not be forgiven, "neither *in this world*, neither in the world to come." Their awful sentence might have been twofold in its effects, the one temporal, the other eternal; the one for the crime of treason, in attempting to corrupt the pure constitution of the Church, the other for the sin of blasphemy against the omniscient God.

Matt xii. 31 32; Mark iii. 28, 29; Luke xii. 10.

That besides this consecration of the whole of the ministers' property to the service of the Church, frequent and large contributions were made by others, cannot be doubted. Mosheim's interpretation, therefore, as applicable to the great body of Christians, is undoubtedly true, that with them it was a community of *use*, not of *possession*. Besides the ministers, the poor were supplied from this fund; and especial mention is made of "the widows," if indeed these were not rather an order of ministers than part of the poor. More properly, perhaps, they belonged to both classes. As deaconesses were early required in the Church, it seems most natural, that those females who, from their poverty and widowhood, were deriving support from the Church, should be employed in this capacity, according to the apostle's precept, "If any work not, neither should he eat." The name of deaconesses might not have been given them for some time after they exercised the duties belonging to that order, for they are called widows before the term deacon even appears in the Acts. Wherein their service consisted, may be sufficiently understood from the office of deacons, which will be next considered. It may be enough to observe, that their order was requisite in the first promulgation of Christianity; because the frequent intercourse between male catechists and the young female catechumens might have brought a scandal on the Church. In the East, where the strict separation between male and female society was then as now proverbial, this measure was quite indispensable.

2 Thess. iii. 10.

APPOINTMENT OF THE SEVEN DEACONS.

Acts vi. 3. The terrible display of the Holy Spirit's power, in the death of Ananias and Sapphira, was succeeded by many illustrious miracles, performed through the apostle Peter. In frequency, and perhaps in their extraordinary character, they equalled our Lord's; agreeably to his promise, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do." On the line of difference between them, some remarks have been already made and a reason suggested, why, during this first period of the Holy Spirit's dispensation, this apostle's ministry was so prominent. This latter point, as one of some importance, will be again adverted to.

John xiv. 12.

The effect of all this was what might be expected. The number of converts daily increased, and the spirit of persecution was exasperated. The apostles were again imprisoned, scourged, and threatened with heavier vengeance. But God released them by his angels; and, in proportion to their need, his Spirit emboldened and guided them, and "his strength was made perfect in weakness." But the storm was now only gathering.

Discontent respecting the Grecian Widows.

Meanwhile within the Church itself were displayed some slight symptoms of discontent, which deserve to be noticed particularly, on account of the measure to which they gave rise. The complaint is called "a murmuring of the Grecians (or foreign Jews) against the Hebrews, (or native Jews,) because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." Who these widows probably were has already been suggested; and if the suggestion, that they were deaconesses, be admitted, the grounds of the complaint may be readily surmised. As the greater share of duty would at this time devolve on the Hebrew widows or deaconesses, they might have been paid more liberally, as their services seemed to require, and hence the discontent.

Order of Deacons.

This, it is true, supposes that the order of deacons and deaconesses already existed, and may seem at first to contradict the statement of St. Luke, that in consequence of this murmuring deacons were appointed. It does not however really contradict it; for evidently some *dispensers* there must have been, and if so, either the apostles must have officiated as deacons, or special deacons there must have been, by whatever name they went. That the apostles did not officiate, is plain from the tenor of the narrative, which indicates that the appeal was made to them, and that they excused themselves from presiding personally at the "ministration," (as was probably desired by the discontented party,) alleging that it was incompatible with their proper duties. "It is not reason that we should *leave the word of God*, and serve tables." This very assertion, then, is proof certain that they did not officiate. Again, on reading over the names of the seven deacons, we find them all of the Grecian or Hellenistic party. Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon,

Acts vi. 5.

Parmenas, and Nicolas, the last of whom is expressly described as a proselyte of Antioch. Now this surely would have produced a murmuring of the Hebrews against the Grecians, unless they had already some in office interested in looking after their rights. With these presumptions in favour of a previous appointment of deacons, it would seem, then, that these seven were added to the former number because of the complaint.[24]

All that is thus far intimated of their office is, that they were employed in the daily distribution of the alms and the stipends due from the public fund. Whether, even at the first, their duties were limited to this department of *service*,[25] may be reasonably doubted. Of this portion of their duties we are now informed, obviously, because to the unsatisfactory mode in which this had been hitherto performed it was owing, that the new appointment took place, and that the subject was noticed at all. It is, however, by no means improbable, that the young men who carried out the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira, and who are described as "ready" in attendance, were of the same order; in other words, deacons by office, if not by name.[26] What may serve to confirm this view of it is, the opposition between what would seem to have been their original title, and another order in the Church. They are called "juniors" and "young men," (νεωτεροι and νεανίσκοι,) terms so strongly opposed to presbyters or elders, as to incline one at the first glance to consider them as expressive of the two orders of the ministry, the seniors and the juniors, the πρεσβυτέροι διάκονοι and the νεώτεροι διάκονοι; the two orders, in short, which at length received the fixed and perpetual titles of presbyters and deacons.[27]

Accordingly, there is no just ground for supposing, that when the same term deacon occurs in the Epistles of St. Paul, a different order of men is intended; first, because an office may preserve its original name long after the duties originally attached to it have been changed; and, secondly, because whatever duties may have been added to the office of deacons, it is certain that the duty of attending to the poor was for several centuries attached to it. Even after the deacons ceased to hold the office of treasurers, and the bishops began to receive the revenues of their respective sees, the distribution of that portion which was allotted to charity still passed through

1 Tim. iii. 8, 12, 13.

[24] Vitringa de Synagoga Vetere, Lib. III. p. ii. C. 5; or p. 188 of the excellent English compendium of that work, by the Rev. J. L. Bernard.

[25] Διακόνια.

[26] It should be observed that, in the Scripture narrative, "the seven" are not called *Deacons*.

[27] It may be objected, indeed, that although the terms might have been different at different periods, yet the writer would have adopted *one only*, because that one would now have been expressive of the class as it existed at all times. But the case is not necessarily so. There might have been some distinction coincident with the change of names, which occasioned him to adopt the one to a certain period of his history, and the other subsequently. So he has applied the name of Saul to the great Gentile apostle in the early part of the Acts, and afterwards as invariably that of Paul, although no one can doubt the identity of the person.

the hands of the deacons. Hence, in a still later period, the title of cardinal deacon; and hence, too, the appropriation of the term *diaconiæ* to those Churches wherein alms used to be collected and distributed to the poor.[28]

Not that it is possible to point out, with any thing like precision, the course of duty which belonged to the primitive deacons. That it corresponded entirely with that of our present order of deacons, is very unlikely, whatever analogy be allowed from their relative situation in the Church. As the Church, during the greater part of the first century, was a shifting and progressive institution, their duties probably underwent continual change and modification. If we were to be guided, for instance, by the office in which we find the "young men" (νεανίσκοι) engaged when the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira were removed, we should say that they performed the business, which, in the present day, would devolve on the inferior attendants of our churches. If, again, we were to judge of their character from the occasion on which we find them acting as stewards of the Church fund, a higher station would be doubtless assigned to them; but still, one not more nearly connected with the ministry of the word, nor approaching more to the sphere of duty which belongs to our deacons. On the other hand, the instances of Stephen and Philip prove, that the title was applied to those who were engaged in the higher departments of the ministry, although not in the highest.

Acts vi 8; viii 5.

After all, it is most likely that the word deacon was originally applied, as its etymology suggests, to all the *ministers* of the Gospel establishment.[29] But the apostles having from the first a specific title, it more properly denoted any minister inferior to them,—any, however employed in the *service* of the Church. Between these, also, there soon obtained a distinction. If we suppose, then, that the *seniors*, or superior class, were distinguished by the obvious title of elder deacons, (πρεσβύτεροι διάκονοι,) the generic and unappropriated term "deacon" would devolve on the remaining class. And thus the present order in the Church, to which that name is applied, may be truly asserted to be deacons in the apostolical and primitive sense of the word; and yet, nevertheless, much may be said about deacons, both in the New Testament and in the writings of the early fathers, which will not apply to them.

Mode of appointment. Acts vi. 2.

The mode in which the present appointment was made must not pass unnoticed. The apostles are said to have called to them "the multitude of the disciples;" to have specified the qualifications for

[28] Lud. Anton. Muratori Antiquitates Italicæ Medii Ævi, Tom. III. p. 571. Also Du Cange, in Glossar. Latin. Medii Ævi: ad *v. Diaconia, Diaconites, Diaconus.* Moshemii Comm. De Reb. Christ. ante Const. p. 121.

[29] Thus the apostles on this very occasion are represented as speaking of their own office under the title of a deaconship, ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ ΔΙΑΚΟΝΙΑ τοῦ λόγου προσκαρτερήσομεν. So also St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, 1 Ep. xii. 4, 5: Διαιρέσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσὶ, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα καὶ διαιρέσεις ΔΙΑΚΟΝΙΩΝ, εἰσὶ, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς Κύριος.

the office; and to have ordained them, when elected and presented for that purpose, by prayer and the laying on of hands. The assembly is described as vested with the power of election, the apostles with the office of ordaining.

General Assembly.

But of whom, it may be asked, was this general assembly composed? Was it made up of all the disciples who chose to attend and vote; or of certain, whose privilege or duty it was to represent the whole body? The literal import of the Greek favours the former supposition; the circumstances of the case itself, the latter; and this so greatly as to render it by far the most probable. In the first place, that there should be either a place found, or permission granted, in Jerusalem, for eight or ten thousand suspected persons to assemble, and unmolested to discuss the very questions which rendered them obnoxious, is very improbable. Equally improbable is it, that so mixed a multitude should be able, under any circumstances, to transact business such as this; except, indeed, by means of some miraculous interference, of which there is no intimation. Some other meaning then must be sought for in this expression, "the multitude of the disciples;" and why should it not mean the *full* assembly of *the disciples appointed for forming such assemblies?* Such a phrase would not be more harsh and unnatural than when we speak of "the *Commons* of Great Britain in Parliament assembled," applying, in the latter as in the former case, to the representative body, the term which properly belongs to the body represented.[30]

[30] St. Luke, in describing the assembly in which Matthias was elected, employs, apparently as an equivalent phrase, ὁ ὄχλος τῶν μαθητῶν. As this is not the only coincidence of expression in the two passages, and as the forms and proceedings described likewise very strikingly correspond, it may throw some light on both to place these points of coincidence in a scheme side by side. The difference between these will be found to arise out of the circumstance before noticed, viz. the absence of inspired wisdom from the one, and its presence in the other.

I. *Election of Matthias.*	II. *Election of the Seven Deacons.*
1. Ἀναστας Πέτρος ἐν μέσῳ τῶν μαθητῶν.	1. Προσκαλεσάμενοι δὲ οἱ δώδεκα τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν.
2. Εἶπεν——ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί.	2. Εἶπον——ἀδελφοί.
3. Δεῖ τῶν συνελθόντων ἡμῖν ἀνδρῶν κ. τ. λ. μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ, γενέσθαι σὺν ἡμῖν ἕνα τούτων.	3. Ἐπισκέψασθε οὖν ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἑπτὰ, πλήρεις, κ. τ. λ. οὓς καταστήσομεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης.
4. Καὶ ἔστησαν δύο.	4 Καὶ ἐξελέξαντο—οὓς ἔστησαν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀποστόλων.
5. Προσευξάμενοι.	5. Προσευξάμενοι.
6. Ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτῶν κ. τ. λ. καὶ συγκατεψηφίσθη μετὰ τῶν ἑνδεκα.	6. Ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας.

In the proceedings of the two assemblies, the only material difference is in the last point. In Matthias's case no laying on of hands is mentioned, because the Holy Ghost not having then been given, (or we should perhaps rather say, the gift of conferring the Holy Ghost,) this sign, whereby it was afterwards communicated, would have been a mere empty form. What in other ordinations was effected by the laying on of the apostles' hands, in Matthias's was effected by the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; with a view to which it is likely that his election was made to take place before that event. Again, in the election of deacons only a single office was conferred, and that they held from

In the narrative of their proceedings, then, what more natural than that these should be called "the disciples," in opposition to the apostles, who were likewise present. The term multitude (πλῆθος,) may then be understood, either as indicating that the meeting was a *full* one, or, what is certainly more in accordance with the general analogy of the original language, it may be used for "the great body of the disciples," by the same obvious figure of speech which we employ when we call the representatives of the commonalty of England "the Commons."

EFFECTS OF STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM.

Acts vii. It was, obviously, an important feature in the Divine scheme, that the sceptre should depart from Judah soon after the coming of the Messiah. Had the Jews continued to possess the right of inflicting capital punishment, an effectual check must immediately have been given to the progress of the Gospel. Even as it was, the disciples had to dread every thing which calumny, intrigue, and tumultuary violence, could effect. Imprisonments, stripes, and menaces, had proved of no avail. The populace thirsted for blood, and Stephen was the first victim.

His death was preparatory to the preaching of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem and Judæa. In exact conformity with the words of the Acts i. 8. Son of God to his apostles, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth," his Holy Spirit directed the course of that light which he was dispensing. To escape further acts of outrage, all the disciples once more forsook Jerusalem and fled. But the dispersion was not as on the day of the crucifixion. They were no longer comfortless, no longer dispirited, no longer at a loss what to do, or what to expect. As in the former dispersion, the apostles, and it may be some few besides, remained in Jerusalem, whilst the Holy Acts viii. 1. Spirit guided the flight of the others through "all Judæa and Samaria." Philip,—he whose name appears second in the list of the seven deacons,—no less than Stephen, justified the wisdom of his appointment. Samaria being already prepared for the Gospel, gladly heard the word from him. Here the far-famed Simon, who was endeavouring, as it would seem, to impose on his countrymen under the pretended Acts viii. 9. character of the Messiah, if not converted, was defeated in his scheme of imposture. Philip, however, could only preach and baptize. The privilege of receiving some extraordinary gift of the Spirit, as a pledge

God the Holy Ghost, or his agents, who as such laid their hands on them. But in the election of Matthias, his first appointment preceded the dispensation of the Spirit. Like the other apostles, he was ordained a witness by the Lord himself, and his ordination by the Spirit was a subsequent procedure. Thus, St. Paul appears first to have received his revelation and apostleship, his appointment *as witness* from the Lord Jesus Christ at Jerusalem, and then, after a considerable interval, the imposition of hands, as a servant of the Church and a minister of the Spirit.

to the young and inexperienced Church that that unseen Spirit had indeed taken up its abode with them and within them, could only be conferred by an apostle. Philip's baptism, no doubt, conveyed all the beneficial effects of Christian baptism; and the Holy Ghost was as really and fully communicated thereby, as if it had been performed by an apostle. The descent and operation of the Holy Ghost was then, as now, unseen, unfelt,—the object of faith only. But while this doctrine was yet strange and new, some assurance of it was requisite, in order to induce each believer to be satisfied that the Comforter was present *to him*,—that these effects, though impalpable, were real. For the purpose of granting this sign of assurance, then, to the Samaritan converts, Peter and John were sent to them from Jerusalem. The form, as has been already noticed, consisted in the laying on of hands, and in prayer, and must have corresponded to our present ceremony of Confirmation, which, doubtless, arose out of it. As the apostles were gradually removed from the earth, those on whom their *perpetual* ministry devolved, might have continued this *temporary* custom, from a view of its expediency for other purposes beyond its original and specific one; and thus *Confirmation* may have rightly and reasonably retained a place among the ceremonies of the Church for ever, although the *sign of Confirmation*, to which it owes its name has been long withdrawn.

Time at which extraordinary gifts ceased.

The fact, that the apostles only could impart the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, may serve to guide us in an inquiry, which has never perhaps been satisfactorily concluded, as to the precise time when those gifts ceased. For, if the above assertion be true, they must, of course, have ceased with the generation which was contemporary with the last of the apostles. If St. John then continued to the close of his life to exercise his apostolical power of imparting the Holy Ghost, his life being prolonged to the end of the first century, *some* workers of miracles may have been found as late as the middle of the second century, but we cannot account (on scriptural grounds) for the existence of any beyond that period.

That the Holy Ghost may after this have interposed, and empowered its agents to perform miracles, cannot certainly be denied, any more than we can now pretend to affirm, that the same power will never again be granted. It would seem, too, from the writings of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Cyprian, that they were familiar with the exercise of such a power in the Church. Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsaræa, who lived as late as the third century, received the title of *Thaumaturgus* from his miracles, or pretended miracles. And, if we may credit Theodoret and Sozomen, there were instances of well-attested miracles later than his. The earliest positive testimony to their cessation, perhaps, is to be found in the writings of Chrysostom. In his Sermons, for instance, on the Resurrection, and in that on the Pentecost; in both of which he attempts to remove any scruples which the fact might have

occasioned, by suggesting the reason why miraculous power should have been withdrawn from the Church.[31]

This is a species of evidence which outweighs any more direct assertion to the contrary. When we read accordingly in Augustin, and other writers, that at the very period when Chrysostom was thus writing and preaching, miracles were commonly wrought at the tombs of the saints, such testimony only tends to make us look back with suspicion and distrust on the accounts given of those of an earlier date, and to attribute a similar inaccuracy and rash credulity to Ruffinus, Theodoret, Sozomen, and others, which is proved against Augustin and many of his contemporaries.

Indeed, even during the latter part of the apostolical era, instances cannot be supposed to have been common, when we consider the true character and probable intent for which such a power was lodged for a time with the Church, and put to ourselves the questions, Why was such extraordinary assistance granted for a season, and then withdrawn, not at once, but gradually? Why were the apostles themselves, who certainly possessed the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, in a degree beyond that which they could impart to others, restrained in the exercise of them, so as to employ them, not at their own discretion, but as the Spirit moved them?

Philip's labours in Samaria having been superseded by the arrival
Acts viii. 26. of the two apostles, he was sent by the Holy Spirit to meet an Ethiopian eunuch in his return from Jerusalem to his home, and to baptize him. Who this person was, and whether he was afterwards employed amongst his own people by the blessed Spirit, and for that purpose converted and baptized thus early by an especial mission, are points left untouched. It may be observed, however, that he was by religion a Jew, a proselyte of righteousness, and not merely a proselyte of the gate; for to this latter description of persons the Church was not yet thrown open. That he was so, appears both
Acts viii. 28. from his being found by Philip busied with a passage in the Jewish Scriptures, and also from the very remarkable circumstances which
Acts x. afterwards attended the conversion and baptism of Cornelius.

CONVERSION OF SAUL.

Acts ix. The holy Comforter rendered the murder of Stephen subservient in another way to the furtherance of his great work. He who out of the stones of Jerusalem could have raised up children unto Abraham, chose to form the noblest champion of his cause on earth out of one of its most strenuous and bitter persecutors.[32] Con-

[31] Chrysost. Op. (ed. Front. Ducæi Rani 1621.) Vol. V. pp. 521. 553.

[32] He states, in his Epistle to the Galatians, that "God separated him from his mother's womb, and called him by his grace;" on which, and other the like expressions, has been founded the doctrine that the salvation of every individual is a matter of arbitrary election. But to what was St. Paul "separated" and "called?" Clearly not to eternal life, but to a particular station of duty, which, while it awakened in him the most anxious sense of extraordinary responsibility, left him still to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, lest, as he tells us,

spicuous in the scene of lawless violence to which we have been alluding, was Saul of Tarsus. Subsequently he was zealously occupied in searching out, and finding grounds for imprisonment against, those Christians who still lurked in Jerusalem. Having exhausted his misguided zeal there, he departed for Damascus with a sort of inquisitorial commission from the high priest. It was on his journey thither, that his miraculous conversion took place. Although the details of that signal event must be familiar to all, and although the subject has been often thoroughly and ably discussed, still the following notices may to many be not unacceptable.

Acts ix. 3. A.D. 35.

The point which is perhaps the most likely to be overlooked is, that this first revelation was totally distinct in its object from that which Saul afterwards received at Jerusalem.[33] All intended by the first was, to convert him to Christianity; by the second he was appointed an apostle. That he immediately began to propagate the faith which he once destroyed, is no proof to the contrary. For this was the privilege, if not the duty, of all Christians; as it had been before supposed to be of all Jews. Besides, although not yet appointed a witness, he was at his baptism "filled with the Holy Ghost," and thereby ordained a minister of the Spirit. Certain it is, that although, after his conversion, he began forthwith to preach, and preached first at Damascus, then, perhaps, in Arabia,[34] and then again at Damascus, even so as to endanger his life; yet on his going ultimately to Jerusalem, he needed the introduction and assurance of Barnabas, to remove from the apostles their suspicion of him. Possessing as they did the gift of discerning spirits, this could hardly have happened if St. Paul were then an apostle.

Two Revelations given to Saul. 1st. On his Conversion. A.D. 44.

This will be more apparent from a slight consideration of the narrative of his conversion. He was struck blind by the glorious light which shone round about him, and he heard and answered a Divine voice, but it does not appear that he then *saw the Lord.* The contrary indeed is implied. Now his appointment to the apostleship is described by him, as taking place in a visible interview with the Lord,—with God manifest in the flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ. Again, Ananias was sent to him; for what purpose? Not, surely, to appoint him an apostle: Ananias was not himself an apostle, and could not therefore, as we suppose, confer *any extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit, much less the greatest of those gifts. He was sent to restore his sight, and to baptize him. This is, clearly, all that Ananias was commissioned to do, and all he is represented as doing. He laid his hands on Saul, and Saul recovered

2d. On his appointment as Apostle.

"when he had preached to others, he should himself be a castaway."—1 Cor. ix. 27.

[33] A.D. 44, or, according to some, 38. See the reasons for assigning the former date in note, page 103.

[34] Although from the narrative of the Acts, taken alone, it would appear that he went immediately from Damascus to Jerusalem, yet by comparing the passage with his own account in the Galatians, it is certain that he went first into Arabia, returned to Damascus, then, after an interval of three years, proceeded to Jerusalem.—See Acts ix. compared with Galatians i.

his sight. He baptized him, and the Holy Ghost descended on him.

That the descent was marked by the peculiar symbol of the Comforter, and consequently conferred on him gifts of the highest order, has been before pointed out, as an inference fairly to be drawn from the sacred records of his ministry. Ananias's declaration alone may be taken as strong presumption of the fact. "The Lord hath sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight," and "*be filled with the Holy Ghost.*" It is in itself, we say, a strong presumption of the fact, because (independently of the consideration that he did possess extraordinary gifts) the latter expression does not ever seem to have been extended to a communication of the Spirit by the imposition of hands. St. Luke, to whose writings it is peculiar, uses it from the first only on those occasions when the *immediate agency* of God is his subject, *e.g.* the appointment of John the Baptist, and the baptism and manifestation of Christ. Observing this same phrase in his account also of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, his sparing use of it subsequently, and the very remarkable occasions on which it does occur, the conclusion is inevitable.

CHAPTER III.

PREACHING TO JEWS AND DEVOUT GENTILES.

From A.D. 41—45.

Conversion of Cornelius.

Hitherto the messengers of Christ and of the Holy Spirit had been sent only to the Jews, to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," or to those to whom they had communicated their privileges and hopes. Hitherto all who had been baptized were, either by birth or proselytism, members of that society which God had set apart as "his own," had elected, sanctified, taught, and governed. Meanwhile the Divine Dispenser was preparing, by a bold and unexpected innovation, to extend his sphere of operation. Among the unsanctified and unclean, of those who belonged not to the Mosaic covenant, and held no interest in its promises, a portion was now to be invited on equal terms into the kingdom of the Messiah.

Acts x.

Matt. x. 6; xv. 24.

Saul had been converted, and was engaged in a course of duty which might train him for still hardier efforts in his peculiar and more important commission. By his removal from the persecuting faction at Jerusalem, too, "the churches throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria" were left unmolested. All was ripe, then, for the counsel of God to take effect.

Acts ix 31.

In one sense this change was not unexpected. It had been too often and too plainly intimated by our Lord, for his apostles, at least, to have misunderstood him. In those remarkable parables, especially, of the great supper, and of the labourers in the vineyard, the very circumstance of the *gradual* admission of the Gentiles is unfolded. Nevertheless, they were far from comprehending the exact import of these hints and declarations, and seem in this instance, as on the subject of Christ's death, to have received them in humble faith, expecting still that some unforeseen method would be devised, to reconcile the truth of their Master's assertions with their own preconceived views. Few points in the general character of the apostles is more worthy of attention than this uncertainty, this vague surmise, with which they received so many important objects of faith. It is thoroughly *in keeping*, not as a feature of

The conversion of the Gentiles had been predicted by Christ.

Luke xiv. 16; Matt. xx. 1.

Judaism merely, but of human nature; and explains to us why our Lord so often repeated his admonition to them *to believe*. Belief under such circumstances formed their chief trial during his abode on earth. It was the trial under which Judas sank, Peter wavered, and all forsook him and fled. Ill fares it with the Christian, when he attempts to force the doctrine of his Master into an unnatural accordance with prejudices however sanctified.

So it was, then, that nothing less than an express and particular revelation, corroborated by a train of circumstances equally extraordinary, was found requisite to induce the apostle chosen for this new ministry to engage in an enterprise so strange and revolting to the whole church. Doubtless, he (and so also the Jews) conceived that God regarded with some difference of favour those "devout Gentiles" who, having forsaken idolatry, worshipped him in spirit and in truth; but that this favour should be so far extended, as to make them fellow-heirs with the Israelites of the promises of the Messiah's reign, promises which they had ever considered as peculiar and unalienable, this was as yet quite incomprehensible.

Early prominence of St. Peter in the Apostolic History.

Up to this period in the history of the infant church, we may observe that Peter occupies the chief, almost the whole attention of the sacred historian. Whatever of an extraordinary nature is to be done, whatever implies a more immediate intercourse with the Holy Spirit, is committed to Peter, either alone, or as the principal agent. It is he who first rouses the drooping brethren to exertion. It is he whose inspired preaching on the day of Pentecost works conviction in three thousand souls. It is he who passes the sentence of the Holy Ghost on Ananias and Sapphira; it is he whose prayer is made effectual for the lame, the palsied, and the dead—whose shadow is deemed holy, and whose very garments convey virtue in their touch. It is Peter who is prominent, and first in every gift and endowment of the Spirit, and in none more than in that "boldness" or "freedom of speech"[35] before the people of the Sanhedrim, which was an especial and high characteristic of an apostle.[36]

Reasons for this.

One cannot help perceiving in all this, and in the attention which the sacred writer has directed to it, that some object must have been intended by the Holy Spirit in thus selecting *for a time* one apostle for repeated communications, instructions, and powers, and also in leaving a record of this preference, whilst the contemporary labours of the others are scarcely noticed. Peter was evidently going through a course of discipline and preparation for this peculiar and trying office. It was—or we should rather say it might have been—necessary thus to accustom him to the frequent instructions of the Spirit, in order that he might be so familiar with the heavenly vision, as to entertain no momentary doubt as to its reality, however much the import of its message should astonish and confound him.

[35] Παῤῥησία. [36] See Acts i. 15; ii. 14; v. 15, 16, 29; ix. 34, 36; iv. 13.

"Rise and go with them, *nothing doubting*, because *I* have sent thee;" *I*, the voice with which thou art familiar. For the better assurance of the church, that the apostle had not been deluded, it might have been requisite that they should be accustomed to regard him as the chief agent of the Spirit, and the great worker of miracles. With their strong disposition to revolt against the unexpected turn which the new dispensation was taking, it might have been necessary that he who was the agent in so unpopular a work, should, by this course of eminent ministry, and especially by acting as the mainspring in the regulation of such affairs as were left to their uninspired decision, acquire an authority and weight of official character, which might of itself repress or soften down the spirit of murmuring. That all this might have been requisite, the event proves. For although it was Peter who converted the first Gentile convert; although he pleaded in his defence an express revelation; although that revelation had received a counterpart in a vision to the devout Gentile, who was to be the first-fruits of his order; although the Holy Spirit had, as it were, reproved his backwardness, by descending before baptism on the destined converts: still, on this subject, there long lurked in the bosoms of the elder members of the church a stubborn and implacable feeling. This ill-suppressed jealousy at length showed itself in the disputes at Syrian Antioch, concerning the conformity of these converts to the Jewish law, and subsequently so far prevailed over the firmness of their own apostle, as to subject him to the well-known rebuke of St. Paul.

Gal. ii. 11.

Some few circumstances attending this opening of the Gospel commission to the devout Gentiles will be now considered. At the same time, in confirmation of the remarks which have just been made on the preparatory discipline of Peter for this work, it may be observed, that with the conversion of Cornelius, all that exclusive or peculiar regard to him in the narrative of the Acts ceases.[37] Henceforward he is not represented as taking a more prominent part in the apostolic ministry than others. The object of his having been made to do so was accomplished, and with the same view the remainder, and by far the greater portion, of the Acts is occupied with St. Paul. In *his* ministry was henceforth developed the mystery of godliness, to trace the progressive stages of which is the main object of St. Luke's history. Merely judging from the result of their collective ministry, we know that the other apostles and ministers of the Spirit must have been actively engaged, each in his own course of duty; but St. Paul's line was the main road in the course of Christianity, into which St. Peter's gradually widened, and to which therefore the brief historian of the Holy Spirit's progressive

It afterwards ceases.

And is attributed to St. Paul.

[37] His imprisonment is indeed subsequently recorded in full detail, but only, it would seem, in order the more fully to illustrate the effect of his new commission on all parties. Herod imprisoned him, and designed to take away his life, because he saw that it was *pleasing to the Jews*.—Acts xii. 3.

dispensation naturally and judiciously confined the residue of his narrative.

Revelation of the admission of the Devout Gentiles to St. Peter.

I have remarked that St. Peter, at the time he was sent to the devout Gentiles, had no more intimation than the great body of the Church, that the Gospel was ever to be preached to the idolatrous Gentiles also. It may be observed, that Cornelius is particularly described as a devout Gentile, "who feared God with all his house." The representation under which he was announced to Peter, is that of "a righteous man, and one who feared God, and could appeal for his character to the whole nation of the Jews."[38] Peter, knowing all this, and having communicated personally with the good centurion, yet prefaces his address to those assembled in his house by saying, that he had hitherto considered such as he shut out from communion with God's people; but that God having declared[39] the contrary, by telling him to call no man common or unclean, he had come to them without scruple. This shows that he understood his revelation as intended only to remove the barrier between the Jew and the proselyte of the gate, or mere believer in Jehovah. That he certainly considered the extension as proceeding no further, may be made more clear from the words which he exultingly uttered on the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his household —words spoken in the rapture of the moment, and therefore the more likely to convey the liveliest impression which his mind had conceived of the liberality and unreservedness of the Spirit's dispensation. "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation *he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted by him.*" This unquestionably limits his view to those of the Gentiles who had already renounced idolatry—in short, the devout Gentiles. It explains, also, in what sense he had understood the Divine communication made to him, that "what God *had cleansed*, it was not for him to call common;" namely, that, in every nation he who already feared God, and worked righteousness, and he only, had been cleansed and accepted by God. With the same sentiment, the Church of Jerusalem received his statement of what had taken place, "glorifying God and saying, Then hath God also granted *even to the Gentiles* repentance unto life." In this sense, then, it will be necessary to consider the admission of the Gentiles to be spoken of, until the period when it shall appear that the Church became acquainted with the design of the Holy Spirit to offer baptism to the idolatrous Gentiles also.

Acts xi. 18.

38 Μαρτυρούμενος ὑπὸ ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

39 Ἔδειξε. Is there not some probability that Cornelius, and the centurion, whose sick servant Jesus healed, were one and the same? Several points in the brief description of the latter coincide very closely with Cornelius's character and circumstances; *e.g.* that he was anxiously careful of his household, and was held in very high estimation by the Jews. Otherwise, too, it seems strange, that nothing further should have been noticed of one so promising, as to receive the Saviour's praise, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."—Matt. viii. 10.

Visible Descent of the Holy Ghost.

Another remark was, that on this occasion, as on one of the greatest moment, the Holy Ghost manifested his descent by the same visible signs as on the day of Pentecost. To this conclusion we are led by remarking, first, in the narrative of the event, "that the Holy Ghost *fell on them*," and was "*poured out* on them;" expressions which could only properly apply to the above-mentioned extraordinary descent of the Holy Ghost. Again, as on the day of Pentecost, it was followed by an involuntary display of the gift of tongues, that gift which was especially denoted by the visible symbol of "tongues of fire." By this, no doubt, God gave now the same proof to the Jewish Christians, that the devout Gentiles were called, as he had before given to the unbelieving Jews, in favour of their converted brethren. And accordingly those believers of the circumcision who had come with Peter, were amazed at the gifts of the Holy Ghost having been poured out even on the Gentiles; for they heard them "speaking in divers tongues, and magnifying God." Lastly, St. Peter's words are decisive of the fact, that the mode of the Spirit's descent was the same as on the day of Pentecost; "The Holy Ghost," said he, "fell on them as on us at the beginning, putting no difference between them and us." Acts xi. 15.

It was further observed, as a solitary instance on record, that the Holy Ghost descended on the candidates for baptism before the ceremony was performed. This strongly confirms the view already taken of the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. They were for *confirmation* of its *real* but *unseen* and *perpetual* descent, and residence in the heart of every member of the Church in every age. Baptism, which was to be our perpetual rite of admission to this privilege, was not superseded by the miraculous signs; those signs were only hailed as a sanction for baptism, inasmuch as they proved that even the Gentiles were admissible to the mysterious and insensible influence of the Spirit through it. The signs were the appropriate *miracles* of God manifested by the Spirit; as healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, walking on the sea, raising the dead, and the like, were the miraculous evidence of God manifested in the flesh. When the apostles healed the sick and raised the dead, they did it by virtue of their appointment by Christ as his witnesses; but when they exercised the gifts of "tongues," of "wisdom," &c. or imparted any divine powers to others, they did so by virtue of their appointment by the Spirit. The one class of miraculous evidence exactly corresponds to the other. Nor is this correspondence diminished by the circumstance, that these gifts were also the means whereby the Holy Spirit taught and spread Christianity, but is rather increased thereby; for a like purpose did even the testimonial miracles wrought by our Saviour serve, as has been already, it is presumed, sufficiently proved and illustrated.

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH.

Acts xi. 22.

This second period of the Holy Spirit's dispensation does not require that we should pause long on any of the transactions which it embraces. Whilst the conversion of Cornelius was taking place, and indeed after Peter had made the Church acquainted with the new enactment of the Spirit respecting the devout Gentiles, those Christians who were scattered abroad still continued to call and to baptize only Jews. At length, certain converts of Cyprus and Cyrene having, doubtless, heard of Peter's revelation, boldly followed his example, and obeyed the command of their Divine Guide, in attempting the conversion of the Gentiles also. Going to Antioch of Syria, they there commenced their labours; "and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great multitude believed and turned unto the Lord." On tidings of this being brought to the Church at Jerusalem, they took the matter into their own hands, and gave directions for the formation of the first Gentile Church. The commission was intrusted to Barnabas, although, from the sacred narrative, it does not appear under what precise character he went. Little more is specified, than that he exhorted them to perseverance on his arrival, and, (as a reason probably for his appointment,) that he was "a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." This description might merely imply, that being more highly and fully endowed with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, than the above-mentioned Cyprian and Cyrenian preachers, he was better fitted for the work of conversion. But when we also read that the hand of the Lord was already with these, and that the work prospered greatly under their management, this could hardly be the reason. What seems more likely is, that they had no presbyter among them, and that therefore their Church establishment was incomplete without one. Barnabas then might have been sent to them in that capacity. But a more probable reason still suggests itself. Is there not some ground to suppose that he went in the character of an apostle? In this case this higher office might supersede, and for a time render unnecessary, the inferior one of presbyter. What gives some show of plausibility to this is, that we know Barnabas had the title of apostle. If appointed as such, and in the same manner as the others, that appointment, as was before suggested, must have taken place at a period preceding this. Now we know that when Samaria was first converted, although he who instructed and baptized there was no less a person than Philip the deacon, yet the Church at Jerusalem sent thither two apostles. The reason for sending these has been explained. It was because none but apostles could confer the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and these gifts or some of them were probably granted to all members of the infant Church. The instance of St. Paul regretting that he had not been able to visit the Roman converts for this purpose, was noticed in illustration

Acts xi. 19—21.

First Gentile Church founded by Barnabas.

A.D. 40.

Probably as an Apostle.

Acts xiv. 14.

Acts viii. 14.

of the truth of this statement. On so important a conversion, then, as this at Antioch, we are naturally led to expect the same procedure on the part of the Church of Jerusalem, as was observed in the conversion of Samaria.

Finding it recorded that, as on that occasion, an official embassy was appointed to Antioch, we naturally expect that he whom they sent (ἀπέστειλαν) should be an apostle, and that he should be sent for a similar purpose as Peter and John had been to Samaria. In Barnabas accordingly we find much which renders it by no means improbable that he was one, especially if viewed in connexion with the presumption arising out of that embassy. To all that has been already suggested, in accordance with this view, it may be added, that, for no reason assigned, Barnabas's name always precedes Paul's, although the latter was equally proved to be "full of the Holy Ghost," until by inflicting blindness on the sorcerer Elymas he displayed his evidence, that he was not only a minister of the Spirit, but one bearing a commission also from the Lord Jesus,—in short, an apostle.[40] Does not this then seem to intimate, that up to that period Barnabas was treated as Paul's superior? Afterwards, we may observe, the order is not reversed, but sometimes the one name, sometimes the other, takes precedence. Doubtless, Paul's is thenceforward more frequently placed first; but this, if it affect the argument at all, only renders the circumstance noticed more remarkable.

Supposing Barnabas to have been an apostle, a reason obviously suggests itself, why, in preference to the others, he should be chosen for this mission. "A Levite and of the country of Cyprus," is the character under which he is first introduced to our notice. Belonging then to the numerous settlement of Jews in that island, he was naturally fixed on as the most proper apostle for converts who had received their first instruction and baptism from his fellow-countrymen, perhaps from his friends or acquaintance.[41]

Acts iv. 36.

[40] Acts xiii. 8. He is however called a prophet in verse 1, perhaps because he is there described as exercising the office of prophet, which was no doubt comprehended in the apostolic commission. Eusebius (Lib. I. C. 12) suggests, that others besides the twelve must have been called apostles during our Lord's abode on earth. His conjecture is founded on St. Paul's account of the Resurrection, in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. It must be confessed, however, that his interpretation of the passage is a forced one; and the notion is besides inconsistent with the indifferent use which is constantly made by the Evangelists of the terms "the apostles" and "the twelve." It is moreover expressly contradicted by St. Luke's assertion, (vi. 13,) "He chose twelve, whom he named apostles."

[41] In this view of the Church of Antioch, the reader of the New Testament in the original Greek will perceive, that of the two rival readings given in Acts xi. 20, Ἕλληνες has been adopted in preference to Ἑλληνισταί. Waiving so much of the question as depends on the balance of authority between the manuscripts, the circumstances of the record, and the context itself plainly determine the former to be genuine. For the opposition expressed by the particles, μεν and δε, indicate that the Cyprians and Cyrenians were not doing what the dispersed were doing, namely, preaching to the Jews alone; but that they, on the contrary, were preaching, to whom? Not εἰς τοὺς Ἑλληνιστὰς, for they *were Jews*, and to them by the dispersed the Gospel had been preached as in the case of Philip, but πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας—to the Gentiles, namely, the devout Gentiles.

Among the circumstances which con-

ST. PAUL'S REVELATION AND APPOINTMENT.

Acts xiii 22; xxii. 17. To the establishment of the Church of Antioch, the first society which admitted the Gentiles as brethren and members of one *Christian* body, we may reasonably attribute the second burst of malignant feeling in the Jewish unbelievers towards their believing A.D. 42. brethren. At their instance, Herod put to death James the brother of John; and his imprisonment of Peter, with the intent to execute him also, is said to have taken place, because he observed that the former "pleased the Jews." Peter, indeed, would at this time be naturally the chief object of their vengeance, and could have escaped from the fate which they had prepared for him only by the interposition of God's angel. On his deliverance from prison he left Jerusalem, as it is probable all the other apostles had already done. St. Paul, at least, when he undertakes to show the impossibility of his having received his instruction from the other apostles, instead of what he asserted to be the case, from Christ himself, and for this purpose enumerates his several visits[42] to Jerusalem, makes no

firm this, it would be wrong to pass over the notice, that at Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. Why such a record should be left by the inspired historian—why the name should appear just there, and should have been wanted and coined just then, are questions which will be naturally answered by reference to the event which had lately and only now taken place. That it was not given to the members of Christ's Church by themselves, is clear from the sacred narrative, in which they are still called, not *Christians*, but "believers," "disciples," "brethren." Neither could it have originated with the unbelieving Jews; for they denied that Jesus was *the Christ*, and would never, therefore, have called his followers by a name which implied that he was. We cannot doubt, therefore, that it was the name bestowed on our Lord's disciples by the Gentile or Heathen world; and that the occasion of it was that which is intimated by the sacred record—the extension of the Gospel to all men. As long as the disciples of Christ were converts from Jews, and from those who had previously adopted, in part, the religious faith of the Jews, they were regarded by the heathen world at large as only a sect of the Jews. But when the new creed began to be adopted by the idolatrous heathen, who had no previous connexion with the Jews, a new word was required to designate a body of men who were neither Jews nor heathen, and the word *Christian*, derived from the title which, as applied to Jesus, was the main point at issue between the Jews and his disciples, was just the word which was most natural and obvious.

It may be regarded, by the way, as a proof that the New Testament histories were not the production of an age much later than the facts they record, that in them the members of the Church are not called *Christians*; but are designated by the terms which that word gradually superseded.

An argument similar to this has been suggested for the early date of the four Gospels, from the fact that our Lord is called in them *Jesus*, and *Christ* in the Epistles, as of later date.—See "Dobbin's Antiquity of the Gospels."

[42] St. Paul, after his conversion, appears to have visited Jerusalem five times.

I. After his return from Arabia to Damascus, at which time he was introduced to Peter and James by Barnabas.—See Acts ix. 26, 28, and Gal. i. 18.

II. When he and Barnabas were sent from Antioch with the contribution. No apostle was then at Jerusalem, but the management of affairs was left to the *elders*. It was during this visit that he probably received his revelation in the temple, as mentioned in 2 Cor. xii.—This visit is omitted in his Epistle to the Galatians.—See Acts xi. 30.

III. On his return from his first apostolical journey, when he went with Barnabas to consult the Church of Jerusalem, concerning the obligation of the Mosaic law on the Gentile Christians. It was during this visit that he communicated "his Gospel" privately to Peter, and James, and John.—See Acts xv. and Gal. ii.

IV. When, in fulfilment of a vow made at Cenchræa, he went from Ephesus, and returned after a very short stay.—Acts xviii. 18, 22.

V. This was at the close of his third apostolical journey, when he went up to

mention of this, which the course of his argument required, had there been at that time any one apostle at Jerusalem.[43]

Trifling as the circumstance is, it becomes important when connected with the evidence of Paul's immediate and apostolic revelation. How it happened that he should go to Jerusalem at that particular juncture will be readily recollected. Soon after Barnabas had been sent to preside over the Church of Antioch, he went to Tarsus, and brought back with him Saul as his coadjutor. Tradition reports, that they were educated together under Gamaliel; which, if true, accounts for the friendly office which he had previously performed in introducing him to Peter and James;[44] as well as for his now choosing him to be his associate. At the very commencement of their joint labours, the disturbances to which we have been adverting occurred at Jerusalem. Among those who, together with the apostles, withdrew from the scene of danger, were very probably the prophets, who then made their appearance at Antioch, and gave notice of a famine which was to take place throughout Judæa. It was for the purpose of conveying to Jerusalem a contribution, which was in consequence raised and sent as a provision against the season of distress, that Barnabas and his companion went thither. They went accordingly, not commissioned to the apostles —nor to the apostles and brethren—but only to the *presbyters*. Acts xi. 30. The apostles were absent, and the presbyters, or those who represented the disciples at large, were all who composed the assembly.

During this visit then of Saul to Jerusalem, he received that revelation which was hitherto wanting to complete in him the character of an apostle.[45] Falling into a trance in the temple, he was permitted, like the other apostles, to be an "eye-witness of the resurrection," to see his Lord and his God manifested in the flesh; and, like the rest, to receive from Jesus himself the appointment of witness, and the powers attached to it.[46] All that portion of the

Revelation to St. Paul.

2 Cor. xii. Acts xxii. 17, 18.

keep the feast of Pentecost, and to declare *openly to all the Church* "his Gospel," or his mission to the idolatrous Gentiles.

[43] See the first and second chapters of his Epistle to the Galatians. His statement there is, that he could have had *no opportunity* of being instructed by the apostles, because on his first visit to Jerusalem he only saw two of them, and that for fifteen days, and no more; and, when again he was fourteen years afterwards in their company, he was employed, not in *receiving*, but *communicating* his revelation to them. The account in the Acts agrees with this, but then, between these two visits, occurs the one in question; and, if he had found any apostles at Jerusalem, his argument was of course open to the objection—how do we know that the borrowed information may not *then* have been received?

[44] Only to these, by his own account, (see Gal. i.) and accordingly he asserts, that after that first visit he was still unknown by face to the Churches of Judæa.

[45] Ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον, καὶ ἀκοῦσαι φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ. Ὅτι ἔσῃ μάρτυς αὐτῷ πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, ὧν ἑώρακας καὶ ἤκουσας.

[46] The period when this took place is not distinctly marked in the New Testament; and it is generally referred to the first visit to Jerusalem. But direct testimony being wanting, it is surely more natural to assign it to the visit which immediately preceded his formal appointment by the Church at Antioch, and his entrance on the course of duty, with a view to which the revelation was made. This, too, is more agreeable to the train of argument which he adopts in his Epistle to the Galatians, and to which allusion has already been made. If he professed to have received his Gospel during the fifteen days of his first visit

apostolical character, which it was the office of the Holy Ghost to confer, had been previously bestowed on him. He had now all the endowments of an apostle, and, thus qualified, he returned with Barnabas to Antioch, ready to enter upon the work with which the third period of the Holy Spirit's dispensation commences. John
Acts xii. 25. (better known by the name of Mark) accompanied them.

to Jerusalem, it might have been supposable, at least by his objectors, that it came from Peter and John, and not, as he asserts, from Jesus Christ; but, in the absence of all the apostles from the scene, even this slight ground for suspicion was removed.

It is somewhat surprising, by the way, that any doubt on the subject of Paul's apostleship should have existed, considering that an apostle was known by so unequivocal a mark as the possession of *superior miraculous power*. On this, accordingly, he ultimately rests his claims, and prevails over the jealous attempts of his rivals and enemies.—It is surprising, but it is, after all, quite consistent with the waywardness of man's heart.

CHAPTER IV.

PREACHING TO JEWS, DEVOUT GENTILES, AND IDOLATERS.

St. Paul's first Apostolical Journey.

A.D. 45—52.

ROUTE.

Antioch in Syria; Seleucia; Salamis; Paphos; Perga in Pamphylia; Antioch in Pisidia; Iconium; Lystra; Derbe; Lystra again; Iconium again; Pisidia again; Perga again; Attalia; Antioch in Syria, (second time;) Phœnicia; Samaria; Jerusalem; Antioch in Syria, (third time.) Acts xiii. to xv. 30.

The return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch was followed by their formal mission to the idolatrous Gentiles. And here we cannot but observe how carefully the Holy Spirit has declared, in its dealings with the early Church, that from the first its operations, as guide and governor, were twofold; that it exercised an occasional and extraordinary authority, by means of visions, and sundry forms of revelation, inspiration, and endowment; and also a permanent authority, unaccompanied by extraordinary signs, by means of the Church as a body, which Church was and is its Temple. Thus the intercourse of the Holy Spirit with Christians, as a society, was not unlike his intercourse with them as individuals. Of the Church He required certain forms, such as the laying on of hands and prayer; and to these attached his ordinary operations. These were indispensable to its authority, whatever manifestations of the Spirit were made independently of them. Notwithstanding, then, that Barnabas and Saul had been appointed to the conversion of the Gentiles by an especial communication of the Holy Ghost, it was necessary, we find, that some further grace should be imparted,—some further sanction given to them, which could only be conveyed, according to the system of the Spirit's dispensation, through certain forms and ceremonies of the Church. Without these forms the Church had no power to confer, and the individuals were incapable of receiving, a portion of the spiritual endowment.

Acts xi. 26.

Separation of Barnabas and Saul for their offices by the Spirit.

Acts ix. 15; xiii. 2.

The mode in which grace was conferred on individuals, was analogous to that in which authority was given to the Church. It mattered not what extraordinary gifts were bestowed; as *Christians*,

—as *redeemed*, they were obliged to be formally baptized. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit descended on them as *agents* and *instruments*, employed for the *general welfare;* the ordinary gifts, as objects of regeneration and redemption, and for their *individual* welfare. Many individuals are conspicuous for both kinds of endowment; and so it was with the Church itself. There was an ordinary grace or authority in it, which it exercised by means of stated forms, and independently of all extraordinary manifestations: and ever as occasion required, that same Divine Person, who dwelt in it, and from whom the authority proceeded, gave some extraordinary display of his government. In both cases what was occasional has passed away; what was regular and continual still remains.

In making these assertions, however, we must be prepared to meet two questions.

The first is, How do we know, that there was in the early Church a secret and regular operation of the Holy Ghost exercised in these outward forms?

Secondly, How do we know, that it did not cease with the extraordinary operation?

The Holy Ghost conveyed under particular forms.

The case now offering itself for consideration, namely, the appointment of Barnabas and Saul, is one of several which furnish to every candid mind a sufficient reply to the first question. The bare circumstance, that the forms of fasting, laying on of hands, and prayer, were observed even with persons "full of the Holy Ghost," and already called to be apostles of the Lord, is a strong ground of presumption that such was the case. But the terms of the narrative render it yet stronger: "Then having fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, dismissed them; *they then, having been sent forth by the Holy Spirit*," *&c.* In the original, the connexion between the two sentences is perhaps more forcibly marked by οὖν, than by the English illative conjunction "then." Without reference, however, to grammatical nicety, no one can read the sentences, and attend to the train of thought running through them, and through the whole passage to which they belong, without acknowledging that their being sent forth by the Holy Ghost referred to the ceremony of prayer, &c. Nor does it affect the argument, that the Holy Ghost had specially directed the Church to ordain these men. For, that this was only a revelation of God's will and special interference, and not an investiture of power delegated to the Church, is manifest,—inasmuch as the investiture of power had already taken place, and the words of the Divine message contain a reference to it as already in force, and are, indeed, an acknowledgment and proof that it was so. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I *have* called them."

Acts xiii. 3, 4.

Acts xiii. 2.

The next question was, Supposing this ordinary and indispensable operation of the Spirit to have been exercised in the primitive Church, how do we certainly know that it did not cease with that

which was extraordinary? If the latter was given as a sign of the reality of the former, the sign being removed, what proof have we now that the thing attested exists?

And still continues to be so conveyed.

To this also there is an adequate reply; and it depends on the truth of this proposition, "If we are assured that God has appointed any outward forms as the means of Divine grace or Divine authority, we are bound to believe that they will continue effectual, until God has annulled the appointment." If instead of the ceremony of baptism, *e.g.* it had pleased Him to appoint a pool like that of Bethesda, which at certain seasons should be troubled by his angel; and to ordain, that all who had diseases should go to that pool on these occasions to bathe for their recovery: we should be bound to rely on the efficacy of the pool, until God should make known that his decree had been annulled. In the case of the pool, this would require no *positive* sign; because, the *effects being sensible*, when the waters ceased to heal, its failure would be of itself proof that God had ceased to impart a virtue to it. On the same principle, no formal, no positive sign or revelation was necessary, to inform the Church that the extraordinary operation of the Spirit and the power of working miracles were withdrawn. The failure of its ministers in their attempts to work miracles, was itself the sign that God had annulled the temporary grant. But as the ordinary operations of the Spirit were *always* unseen and unfelt, the only indication of their failure and cessation would be a *positive revelation*. Until such is given, we are obliged to believe in them as a duty, and have as much reason to do so, as to suppose that to-morrow the sun will be the means of conveying light and warmth.

Route of Barnabas and Paul.

But to return to Barnabas, Saul, and their assistant, Mark, whom we left preparing for their journey. Their course was through Cyprus first, (probably on account of the connexion of Barnabas with that island,) thence across to the continent, and through the countries of Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia. On their arrival in Pamphylia, Mark must have become more alive to the risk of the enterprise; for, although thus far their reception had been gracious, he forsook the apostles and returned. His place seems to have been supplied by Titus, although it is not expressly so stated. Adverting to what has been already observed of the office of deacons, it is not unlikely that Mark had accompanied the apostles in that capacity, and that on his refusal to proceed, some one would be wanted to act as deacon in the performance of the Christian Church service, wherever there might be an opportunity. That Titus was accordingly sent for—possibly from Antioch—is inferred from his being found in their company at the end of the journey.

Acts xiii. 4.

Mark quits them.

Acts xiii. 13.

Gal. ii. 1.

Their method of preaching.

The mode in which the mission was conducted was, as the reader may recollect, to preach first to the Jews and proselyted Gentiles, and then to the idolaters. Notwithstanding this marked precedence

Acts xiii 46.

and preference, all their persecutions arose from the former. From the Gentiles (when the Jews did not prepossess their minds against them) all they had to fear as yet, was a misapprehension of their object,—lest their miracles might make them appear to the multi-
Acts xiv. 11. tude as "gods come down to them in the shape of men."

Another point to be observed in their proceedings is, that they
Acts xiv. 23. ordained presbyters in every Church on their return. So brief a ministry could hardly have qualified any of the new converts for the office, unless some miraculous interposition of the Spirit had
Acts xi. 26. taken place, such as was supposed to have occurred at Antioch in Pisidia—the first scene of idolatrous conversion.

Acts xv.

DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM.

A.D. 52. Before St. Paul renewed his labours among the idolatrous Gentiles, he was commissioned by the Church of Syrian Antioch to
Acts xv. 1, 2. proceed with Barnabas to Jerusalem, for the purpose of taking the sense of the Church there respecting a question which was now warmly canvassed at Antioch. Peter's mission, as was observed, received indeed the sanction of Judaizing Christians; but their old prejudices were still so strong, as to make them expect that these new associates, to whom the apostles had opened the gate of Christianity, should first pass through that of Judaism. They accordingly insisted on the Gentile converts at Antioch being circumcised, and made to conform to all the Jewish law. Jerusalem being still the residence of the apostles, and therefore the chief seat of Church authority, to Jerusalem was the decision of the question referred.

That the decree of the Christian body there only related to the devout Gentile Christians, is certain; because none but these had as yet been admitted into the Church of Antioch. What confirms this is, that the decree was obviously framed with reference to their condition as such.

Debate in the assembly. St. Peter spoke first in the assembly which had been called for discussing the question, and declared his opinion to be, that on the Gentile party the Church ought not to impose a burthen of ceremonies which neither the Jewish party nor their fathers could bear. St. James supported him in his view of the question, and proposed the words of the decree, in a manner which shows that he fully coincided with St. Peter, and did not think that he was placing any yoke on the neck of the Gentile converts *which they had not borne*
Acts xv. 19, 20. *before* their conversion. "Wherefore my opinion is, not to introduce any thing which may disturb and confound those Gentiles who turn to God;[47] but to command them to abstain from meats offered to

[47] This is certainly the force of παρά. The word παρενοχλεῖν expresses that confusion of thought which would almost certainly have been produced in the mind of a convert taught Judaism and Christianity together, as two distinct systems. He was in danger of considering them both necessary and both coex-

idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood,"—that is, to command them to observe just so much and no more of the Jewish law as they had observed before Christianity was preached to them. To this they would hardly object, (as the apostle probably means to say,) because in every part of the world, the devout Gentiles readily consented to keep these few observances of the Jewish law, however unwilling to burthen themselves further, and to become proselytes of righteousness. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day." Acts xv. 21.

When, therefore, Paul is afterwards represented as distributing this sentence or opinion of the Council of Jerusalem to the several Churches through which he passed in his second journey, it cannot be supposed that he intended to recommend it as a rule binding on the converts from idolatry also. This, indeed, would be wholly irreconcileable with his own repeated declarations to them in his Epistles,[48] and is not implied by any statement in St. Luke's narrative. It may be even doubted whether St. Paul's preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles, was at that time known generally to the Churches of Judæa, or to that particular Council of Jerusalem. It is said, indeed, that the conversion of the Gentiles was proclaimed by Paul and Barnabas as they passed through Phœnicia and Samaria in their journey to Jerusalem, and that they even reported to the Church there, "all things that God had done *with them*."[49] But still the whole account, considered as a whole, looks very much as if they were understood by all—by all, at least, except the apostles—to speak of the devout Gentiles. That there was a good reason why St. Paul should not yet venture to give publicity to his mission, nobody will question, who considers the rancorous persecution which assailed him, when the Jewish Christians, (for the first time, as it seems,) became acquainted with it. Possibly for this very reason the appointment took place at Antioch, and not at Jerusalem. His own account of this transaction, too, as given in his Epistle to the

Qualifications of this Decree.

Acts xv 4.

istent, rather than successive portions of the same religion.

Even as it was, such was doubtless the impression made on the minds of many, for the first century, and longer. That Tertullian, *e.g.* considered it in this light is more than probable.—See Apol. sect. 9.

This non-interference with established usages beyond what was absolutely necessary, was, it is to be observed, in exact conformity with the method by which the Jewish religion had been established. The Jews had been allowed to retain many Egyptian rites, as Warburton points out in his fourth book of the Divine Legation; and hence, the error of assigning a heathen origin to several of the corruptions of the Christian Church, which, although manifestly resembling heathen ceremonies, were immediately derived from the Jews. Some, doubtless, were immediately drawn from Gentile practices; but not all which correspond with heathen rites.

[48] *Inter al.* Rom. xiv. 14: "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean in itself." 1 Cor. x. 25: "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no questions for conscience sake." Rom. xiv. 17: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." Col. ii. 16: "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink." 1 Tim. iv. 4: "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving."

[49] This and the like expressions may be noticed in reference to the distinction pointed out between the miracles of Jesus and those of his apostles.

Galatians, is, that he told the secret privately, and only to Peter,
Gal. ii. 2 James, and John, "lest by any means he should run, or had run, in vain." The narrative of the last visit which he paid to Jerusalem tends to produce the same impression. He is represented as explaining his ministry to the Church, in terms which strongly indicate that the whole Church then for the first time understood the nature of it. On this occasion it is particularly recorded, that
Acts xxi. 18. *all the presbyters* were present. His Gospel is then more pointedly
Acts xxi. 19, 29. declared to be one appropriated to him, the details of it are given one by one, (καθ' ἕν ἕκαστον,) and the assembly glorify God, as for some new and marvellous act. Then, too, it is for the first time thought necessary to warn him of the danger to which his mission was likely to expose him from the Jewish party; and it is then, indeed, that he first incurs any risk amongst his countrymen at Jerusalem; although the same reason had long been operating to render him an object of deadly hatred to Jews and Judaizing Christians out of Palestine.

And how did the persecution commence? Not with the Jews residing at Jerusalem; but after he had been almost seven days in the temple, without incurring any suspicion from them, "*the Jews which were of Asia*," (and who doubtless recognised him as the person they had often seen preaching to the idolaters, and who, perhaps, had before this assaulted him,) when they saw him in the
Acts xxi. 27, 28. temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, "crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place," &c.

Objection answered. One powerful objection, it must be confessed, bears upon this supposition. If it be correct, the most important act of the blessed Spirit's dispensation, and the most remarkable, must have remained a secret from the Church of Jerusalem (the apostles being excepted) for fifteen years. Whether our familiarity with the ordinary modes of communication in modern days, may not cause us unduly to magnify the objection, especially as the want of such modes must have been peculiarly felt in the intercourse between the members of a poor and suspected sect on domestic affairs, the reader is left to consider. However, be it allowed or not, it must be admitted that this would not be a solitary instance of a strange ignorance in one part of the Christian society of its proceedings elsewhere. What, for instance, could have been a more interesting subject of report than the conversion of St. Paul? And yet, although this took place almost on the borders of Judæa, it is clear that the apostles themselves could not have known it for certain, when after an interval of several years he visited Jerusalem; else it would not
Acts ix. 27. have been necessary for Barnabas to assure them of it, before they received him to their confidence and fellowship. The ignorance of
Acts xviii. 24, to xix. 2, 3. those disciples of John Baptist, whom St. Paul met with in Asia Minor, whether there was any Holy Ghost, is another similar case.

But, whatever was the information of the Church of Jerusalem respecting the admission of idolatrous converts to Christianity, the decree of the council could not, for the reasons assigned, have been intended to apply to them also. The proselytes of the gate—the devout Gentiles—were enjoined to observe the rules enumerated, on the principle, that Christianity did not interfere with any civil or social institution, but left the members of all societies bound, as before, by their social or civil obligations. On this principle it was, doubtless, that St. Paul circumcised Timothy, and not Titus; and, on the same principle, the Church was not inconsistent in observing the first day of the week, as appears from Acts xx. 7, and also the seventh day of the week, as appears from Acts xiii. 14, 42, and xvi. 13. These observances they retained as partial adherents of the Jewish society; and accordingly, when Jerusalem was destroyed, its rites overthrown, and the nation, *as a nation*, annihilated, they, as well as the Jewish Christians themselves, considered themselves released from the obligation. Some superstitious observance of the decree indeed long existed in the Church, although it does not appear to have been by any means generally looked on as binding.[50] Still, its directions are sanctioned in the decrees of at least one council,[51] and its authority has from time to time been recognised by several Christian communities.[52]

Acts. xvi. 3; Gal. ii. 3.

Whether the Decree is of perpetual authority.

Individuals, too, among the most learned and enlightened of later times, have maintained its perpetual authority,—Grotius among others. That the introduction of one moral rule into the list of injunctions might have biassed these, in their view of it, is not impossible. In rejecting it they seemed to be annulling, not only the precept to abstain from meats offered to idols and from blood, but that also which forbade fornication. Lightfoot accordingly avoids the scruple by making fornication and polygamy synonymous. And, that the word translated "fornication" should embrace under its general signification polygamy and adultery is perhaps admissible; but that it should be applied to either specifically, is more than can be proved. In truth, all the doubt and difficulty may be traced to a false, or rather an indistinct, view of the true character of the Jewish law, of which this was, after all, only a portion. As the observance of the old law was sanctioned by the apostle in

[50] See Justin Martyr, Dialog. cum Trypho, p. 237. Origen, cont. Celsum, Lib. VIII. C. 30, and Tertullian Apolog. C. 9. In like manner, we find the eastern Churches in the second century alleging the example of St. John and St. Philip for celebrating Easter on the day of the Jewish Passover, while the western Churches urged the practice of St. Peter and St. Paul in support of their observance of the day of the Resurrection. The question was not set at rest until the decree of the Nicene Council on the subject; and even then some refused to acquiesce, and were on that account stigmatised as *Quartodecimani*.

[51] Conc. Gangr. can. 2.

[52] The more rigid Anabaptists have maintained its perpetual obligation on Christians; and likewise the sect founded by Glass and Sandeman in the beginning of the last century. The Copts are reported not only to observe the decree, but to circumcise; probably with the view of conciliating the Mahometans.—See Boone's Book of Churches and Sects, p. 163.

the case of those Christians who had been subject to it before their conversion; so, in the case of the proselytes of the gate, that portion of it which they had previously embraced received a similar sanction.

The Mosaic law, it is well known, comprises moral commandments and ceremonial rules all blended together, not only in the great body of Jewish Scripture, but even in the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God. The command to keep the seventh day as a sabbath is there found side by side with those which enjoin love to God and our neighbour, and with those which prohibit murder, theft, adultery, and false-witness. Nevertheless, a distinction is drawn by universal consent between the two portions of the law. It is agreed, that the ceremonial part has been abrogated, the moral left in force; and this is true, and for all practical purposes sufficient. It would, however, be a more exact and correct mode of expressing the truth, to say, that the whole of the Mosaic law was done away with, *as far as it was binding because found in the law of Moses;* but that the moral portion of the law continues in force, because it was in force prior to the promulgation of the Mosaic law. If, for instance, the sinfulness of murder depends on its being a violation of the sixth commandment, then was Cain guiltless.[53]

Why what was already written on men's hearts should have been specified in God's written law; whether it be, that in this, as in the whole course of God's dealings with man, each succeeding revelation was a comment on the former; or that these precepts were incorporated with the ceremonial or judicial law, in order to annex to them civil and temporal rewards and punishments, are questions which need not now be discussed. It is enough for the present purpose that such was the case. Now, the Gentiles, *as members of the human race*, had all the moral law engraven on their hearts;
Rom. ii. 15. "their consciences," as St. Paul tells us, "accusing or else excusing them." In admitting these, therefore, to a partial fellowship with them, (such as the proselyte of the gate enjoyed,) it was not to be expected that the Jews would enjoin on them any rules beyond those which were ceremonial, and of these only enough to serve as a badge of distinction, and a test of sincere proselytism. The observance of the moral law would be considered as otherwise binding. History, however, sufficiently explains why it may have been expedient to place among these ceremonial rules one moral precept, that, namely, which enjoined them to abstain from fornication. Murder, theft, false-witness, and all other moral offences, were still universally recognised as such by the consent of conscience

[53] Tertullian points out the manner in which our first parents may be convicted of having violated every command in the Decalogue by eating the forbidden fruit; and thence argues for the *prior* existence of a law equivalent in authority and import to the Decalogue. Such a law has been communicated and is registered on every man's *conscience*.—See his Tract. adv. Judæos, C. 2. See also Whately's Essays, Second Series, Essay 5.

in all. Fornication, alone, was not merely a common vice, but had ceased to be generally regarded as a sin. In its *excess* only it was held to be blameworthy.[54] What more natural, therefore, than that the Jews should bind the proselyte, by an express law, to abstain from this vice, when he had ceased to feel himself bound to do so by the law of nature. And it is a coincidence worthy of notice, that the denial of a moral obligation in this particular has formed a prominent feature in the ethical systems of the most celebrated modern infidels, Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Helvetius.

If this view of the subject be correct, it will appear, that when the authority of the decree of Jerusalem ceased, Christians were thereby no more absolved from the duty of continence, than they were, by the cessation of the authority of the whole law of Moses, from the duty of honouring their parents, or abstaining from theft and murder. Indeed, he who is contented to do only what forms an express precept in holy writ, and to abstain from that only which is formally forbidden, misapplies the Scriptures. On man's conscience alone it is that the whole moral law is written, like the Ten Commandments, by the finger of God himself, but not, like these, in perishable characters. This was the first revelation of God to man, and co-existent with his creation; and even the last dispensation was not at all designed to supersede the use of this original internal revelation. The New Testament does not contain any code of ethics; it only alludes to the moral law as already known and provided; or seeks to correct and reform those parts which, although engraven perfect on man's heart by God, had become indistinct, and, in some few instances, nearly effaced. It furnishes *motives* to the observance of this law, and *promises assistance* in the performance of it. This, and not *a revelation of the moral law*, is the instruction which a Christian is to expect from his Bible. As the author of this instruction, our Lord speaks of himself, and of him whom he was to send to us, under the title of God *encouraging* us, (that is, exciting us by new motives, and new promises of aid,) and not under that of lawgiver: "ἄλλον Παράκλητον δώσει ὑμῖν—He shall give you *another Comforter*." John xiv. 16.

So much for the temporary character of this famous decree, whatever authority it may be supposed to have had while it remained in force. On this point much difference of opinion has existed. Our estimate of its authority must, of course, greatly depend on the character we assign to the persons who composed the assembly, and the circumstances under which they were acting. Without, therefore, referring to the specific conclusions which have been drawn, either for or against the authority of general councils, from the various assumptions with regard to this, it will be plainer, and less tedious, to state concisely the leading questions by which those views

[54] "Ne sequerer mœchas *concessa cum Venere* uti,
Possem," &c.—HORACE.

may be elicited, and to direct the attention to that which appears on the whole to be the most satisfactory reply.

Extent of this Council.

I. The first question is, Was this a general council? that is, did it represent the whole Church? or only one branch of it, namely, the Church of Jerusalem? There is nothing in St. Luke's account of it to imply, even remotely, that it assumed the former character. It was not general, as composed of the heads of all the Churches, for none were present but the ambassadors of Antioch; and these came to consult, and not to join the council: nor again as composed of all the apostles; for St. Paul, and doubtless St. Barnabas too, were apostles; and they were present indeed, but it was in the character of *ambassadors*, and not of delegates.

Acts xv. 22.

Inquiry into its inspiration.

II. The next question is, Was it an inspired or uninspired council? The opponents of the authority of general councils, in later times, have mainly insisted on the former view; and point out this circumstance as creating the essential line between this and any that has been subsequently held. The learned and candid Mosheim agrees so far with this view, as to suppose, that all the business on this occasion being left to the apostles, they, as inspired persons, must have pronounced an inspired decision.[55] Perhaps all inquiries into the ecclesiastical affairs of this extraordinary period lean too much to the notion, that every transaction in which an inspired person appears, must have been the result of *immediate* inspiration. As far as the narrative guides us, no such intimation is given in the present instance; and it may be safely asserted, that the apostles themselves were not throughout their ministry passive agents of the Holy Spirit.[56] The office of that blessed Comforter was to guide them to the truth, when the truth could not otherwise be obtained. Judging from the apparent course of his government, we should say, that had there been error suggested, his presence would have been

[55] De Rebus Christian. ante Const. Magn. p. 153.

[56] Thus St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Unto the married I command—not *I*, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband," &c. "But to the rest speak *I*, *not the Lord*, If any brother hath a wife," &c.—See 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12.

The greater part of what the apostles wrote was, doubtless, entirely the suggestion of their own minds, and, properly speaking, *uninspired*. Its *authority* is not at all diminished by this circumstance, if we grant (what it would be absurd to doubt) that every wrong suggestion must have been checked by the impulse of the Spirit, every deficiency supplied by actual revelation, and every failure or fault of memory miraculously remedied. The *revelation* was *miraculous*, but it was recorded just as any man would record any ordinary information which might be the result of reasoning, or of report. The Bible is the only book in the world which appeals to God for its authority, without affecting or pretending to the immediate authorship of God. Mahomet publishes, but Allah indites, the Koran; and its very style is more than human. The authors of the Bible, on the other hand, write, as God's servants act. The modes of thought, the manner, the language, are different in each, and in each, no less than his actions, his own. Here and there are marks of an inspiration which dictates to the very letter; but ordinarily it is only a Divine superintendence, preventing error or omission, and interposing only for that purpose. God has enabled man to record and to teach his Word, as he has enabled him to do his will; not by superseding the use of his natural faculties, but by aiding them. With a view to both, his Spirit was given, in order to be *called in* when assistance should be needed, and was hence designated by the expressive name ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΤΟΣ.

manifested, or a divine impulse given to some particular members of the council—but not otherwise. It was Christ only whose inspiration was perpetual, and who needed no fresh communication as new emergencies presented themselves.[57] What was meant by the expression, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," will perhaps be seen more clearly when we examine the third question. Acts xv. 28.

Character attributed to the Church of Jerusalem.

III. Under what character was the Church of Jerusalem appealed to by the Church of Antioch? Whatever the practice might be in later times, as yet, no jurisdiction was exercised by one Christian society over another—not even by the Church of Jerusalem over her children in Christ. Paul and Barnabas had been sent to convert the idolatrous Gentiles, (important as this measure was beyond all others which engaged the attention of the early Christians,) solely by the appointment of their own Church at Antioch, without the advice or knowledge of the sister Church at Jerusalem. In the present instance, too, they were commissioned with an embassy, the circumstances of which, if duly considered, must satisfy any candid inquirer, that its object was not perhaps even advice and assistance in deliberation. First, certain members of the Church of Jerusalem come to the Church at Antioch, *preaching a new doctrine*—a doctrine of which the Church at Antioch had received no intimation, even although Paul, so highly favoured, was with them. They taught the brethren, and said, "Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Acts xv. 1. It was natural, therefore, that they of Antioch should send to Jerusalem, to ascertain whether any credence was to be given to the report of these men who had come from them—whether the Church there, the apostles or other members, had indeed received any new communication from the Holy Spirit, concerning the universal obligation of the Jewish rites, as necessary to salvation. For a full investigation of the matter the Church was assembled, and it being found that the notion had originated with certain unauthorized persons of the Pharisaical sect, in their perverse zeal for the law, Peter and James explained the inexpediency of making any innovation; and Paul and Barnabas were dismissed, together with some members of their own society, to assure the Church of Antioch, that no new revelation had been given on the subject—that their rule at Jerusalem, the only one sanctioned by the Holy Ghost, was to oblige the converts to observe that which they were accustomed to observe before their conversion, and nothing more. Acts xv. 5.

If the foregoing remarks are correct, we must seek elsewhere for

[57] It was, perhaps, to indicate this that the Bible records the failure of the disciples, in their attempt to perform certain miracles. "This kind," says Jesus, "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." It is not said, that they were *incapable* of performing these miracles, but it is intimated, that their endowment was different from Christ's,—that they must first, by means of stated forms, apply for specific powers from God, and then, indeed, these, and greater than these, should they perform.—See Matt. xvii. 21; Mark ix. 29.

On General Councils.

the origin of general councils, and find some other foundation for the authority which has since been claimed for them. Elsewhere, also, we must search for an example in the apostolical age of one Church exercising jurisdiction over another. As to general councils, indeed, they obviously cease to be practicable as soon as the union of the universal Church has been dissolved; in truth, they were before that event impracticable—the history of these councils proves it—as to all purposes of unanimity. One Church may ask advice of another, or refer a difficult question to another; but for independent and unassociated Churches to meet all in one *council*, is a practical contradiction. It supposes the Church to be one, in the same sense, in which each separate Christian society alone is, and ever was, one, from the first establishment of our faith. Christian unity, the never-failing plea for these measures, has been so often a topic of bitter controversy, that we need not wonder at its assuming at this day a difficult and subtile character. More of it by and by.

Cautions to be observed in reading Ecclesiastical History.

In concluding these remarks, one caution suggests itself which cannot be too early inserted in a review of the progress of Christianity. It is, not to look at every portion of the ecclesiastical structure as it appears rising under the hands of the Divine Builder, as if conveying a correct notion of the finished work. Objects prominent at first, and resembling in their use the scaffolding or props of a real building, were afterwards removed. Others, by the application of new pieces, became so altered as not immediately to be recognised. One part, without undergoing any alteration, was yet gradually plastered up and removed out of sight. Another, the Divine Architect has left to the discretion of posterity, to be modified from time to time so as to suit the changing circumstances of those who were to occupy it. In examining this edifice, much more in the bold attempt to repair it, the most judicious method is, not to begin by comparing it with the rude draughts in which it was projected; but rather to survey the Church as it stands, and removing one by one (where needful) those parts which are detected to be the unauthorized work of men's hands, to let the holy Builder's name appear on those parts alone of the remainder, on which it is visible in his own writing. This only is "not to diminish, not to add thereto;" and this is what our reformers did.

Second mission to the Gentiles of Paul and Barnabas.

We have conducted Paul and Barnabas through their embassy to Jerusalem, and must now prepare to trace their second mission to the idolatrous Gentiles. It is probable that they remained at Antioch no longer than was necessary for securing the disputed rights of the Gentile converts at that place, an office which seems to have devolved on Paul alone. Peter had indeed been the especial apostle of the *devout* Gentiles, of whom alone the Gentile portion of the Church at Antioch was at first composed; and on this account, no doubt, soon followed Paul and Barnabas thither. But his arrival

was, probably, only a signal for the zealots to press their point more earnestly. So successful were they, that the Gentile advocate shrank from his office, and was ready to yield to their demands. Barnabas followed his example. Paul alone retained his firmness, roused his noble fellow-labourer to a sense of his duty, and for a time quieted the spirit of faction. Gal. ii. 11.

All was now ready for a second apostolical journey; the Church was at rest, and the services of Barnabas and Paul were no longer required at home. But the reader will recollect, that henceforth he is to trace their course of ministerial labour apart. On the grounds of their separation, and on its probable results, it is unnecessary to dwell; but, leaving Barnabas's future history for a subsequent consideration, let us follow the record of the Holy Spirit, and holding the thread which He has left us, pass on through the gradual enlargement of the covenant, under the agency of the great apostle selected for this purpose.

Their separation.

Acts xv. 39.

One previous observation may not, indeed, be unacceptable to him, who feels that it is inconsistent with the character of these good and holy men, friends from their youth, thus to have parted in bitterness, under circumstances which might seem sufficient to have repressed all private differences. Did they part in bitterness? Paul afterwards spoke of Barnabas with respect and affection, and received even Mark into his service when he thought him worthy of it. But that zeal which was strong enough to have subdued the mere impulse of anger, had a similar power over feelings of friendship, and even over the ties of nature. Who shall say, that in voluntarily separating their course for ever, as appears to have been the case, each was not submitting to a painful restraint, under the consciousness of doing the best for the great good cause? Who shall say, that each may not, by virtue of this very act, have inherited a portion of the reward promised to those who should forsake father, mother, brethren, or friends, for the sake of Christ and of his Gospel?

1 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. ii. 9; Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

Hence we obtain a further proof, if indeed any such be requisite, that the extraordinary inspiration of the apostles was not an *abiding* or *continual* endowment, but only occasional. On matters of doubt or difference the Holy Spirit interposed its aid. But here no interference took place; probably, because the result of the disagreement was most beneficial to the common welfare; because both were right. By a division of ministerial labour between the only two who had as yet been commissioned to the idolatrous Gentiles, the extension of the Gospel was promoted. It has been remarked, that Paul only was recommended to the grace of God. St. Luke's silence, however, does not altogether imply, that Barnabas received no such formal dismissal. In Paul's case alone it might be mentioned, because to him now, and to the details of his mission, the narrative was to be limited.

CHAPTER V.

St. Paul's second Apostolical Journey.

From A.D. 53—56.

ROUTE.

Acts xv. 41; and xvi to xviii. 22.

Rest of Syria; Cilicia; Derbe; Lystra; Iconium; Phrygia; Galatia; Troas; Samothracia; Neapolis; Philippi; Amphipolis; Apollonia; Thessalonica; Beræa; Athens; Corinth; Cenchræa; Ephesus; Cæsarea; Jerusalem; Antioch in Syria.

Attendants on St. Paul.

Acts xv. 22.

Silas and Judas Barsabas were the messengers appointed by the Church of Jerusalem to accompany Paul and Barnabas on their return to Antioch. Here Silas was induced to remain, and being a prophet, was fixed on by Paul as a fit substitute for the fellow-labourer of whose assistance he was now to be deprived. Soon after he commenced his journey, he found at Lystra another meet companion in the young and faithful Timothy. At Troas, it would seem, from the narrative of the Acts, that Luke was added to their company. This then is the little band of Christian heroes, whose progress, under the second mission of the Holy Spirit to the idolatrous Gentiles, we are now to consider.

Acts xvi. 11.

Probable number of Converts.

In what numbers these were added to the Church cannot be determined from the sacred record. Mention is made of the success of the mission at Philippi, at Beræa, at Athens, and especially at Corinth; and from St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians, it appears that some conversion of idolaters took place amongst these also. Probably some were converted in most of the places through which the apostle and his company journeyed, the notices in the Acts being evidently limited to the more remarkable instances, such as Dionysius the Areopagite, and "the honourable women" at Beræa.

1 Thess. i.

Acts xvii. 11—13, 34.

It is not, of course, intended to pursue the apostle through the several stages of his work, but, agreeably with my plan, only to point to those parts of his route at which for any reason it may be desirable that we should pause.

Thus, passing over the immediate points of his journey, at Troas we find him receiving from his Divine Guide an especial communication. As one of the various modes in which God was wont to visit his servants and the agents of his will, this, then, deserves to be particularly noticed.

ST. PAUL AT TROAS.

Acts xvi. 8.

His vision.

Whilst Paul was at Troas, a vision appeared to him in the night. A man of Macedon seemed to stand before him, and say, "Pass over and help us." From this dream or apparition, the apostle inferred that the Lord had called him thither to preach the Gospel; and the result proved that he was not mistaken. The Holy Ghost, which had hitherto checked and diverted their course, when proceeding contrary to the line marked out in the Divine counsels, now permitted them to pass over, and crowned their efforts with success.

From the words of the sacred narrative, it cannot be certainly determined, whether this were a waking vision or a dream. Supposing it, however, to have been of the latter description, it would be by no means a singular instance of God thus communicating his will to his servants, and even to others. Abraham, Abimelech, Jacob, Joseph, Pharaoh, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, are familiar instances. Of these "last days," too, it had been expressly foretold, among the ordinary signs, that men should "see visions and dream dreams."[58]

Gen. xv. 12; xx. 3; xxviii 12-16; xxxvii. 5; xli. 1; 1 Kings iii. 5; Dan. iv. 5.

It is no where suggested, that there was any thing peculiar in the manner of dreaming on these occasions. Sometimes, too, as in the present instance, it looks like the ordinary result of the circumstances under which it is reported to have occurred. If this were a *dream* of St. Paul, (it may be said,) what ground had he and his company to suppose it a Divine impulse, and to class it with the the light and the voice sent to him when on the road to Damascus, or with the vision of "unutterable things," which he received in his trance in the temple? Would it not have been more sober and reasonable to conclude, that the approach to the verge of the Asiatic continent, and the sight of that famous strait which formed the slight barrier between them and Europe, had carried Paul's meditations to the opposite shores? Musing upon those especially who, crossing here with Alexander, made conquest of the East, even of his own Judæa, and established in Egypt a rival to Jerusalem, he could not but expect to retain in his dreams some impression of a train of thought so deeply interesting, tinged, as every dream of his might well be, with the one subject which was predominant in his mind. It must be recollected, however, that the Holy Ghost (by some mode of communication not specified) had of late been making known his approval or disapproval of the several steps of their journey as soon as they were attempted. The absence of this check, therefore, might have formed an appropriate evidence that the call was Divine. Still, as the same solution will not serve in other cases, it will be more satisfactory to take a general view of the

General observations on divine communication.

[58] Joel ii. 28, quoted and applied by St. Peter in his harangue on the great day of Pentecost.—Acts ii. 17.

question, extending it not only to all inspired dreams, but to all other modes of Divine communication. Let us consider then, first, what those modes were, and then, what evidence the persons addressed had, that the communication in each instance was Divine.

Visions.

I. *Visions.*—By which is meant, any communication conveyed through an object of sight. Of this kind were, the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's banquet room, the pillar of fire and cloud which guided the Israelites through the wilderness, and the like.

Dan. v. 5; Exod xiii. 21, 22.

Voices.

II. *Voices*, or revelations conveyed through the sense of hearing. These were the most frequent, and although often accompanied with extraordinary impressions on the other senses, yet were naturally the readiest and most distinct mode of communication. Such was the giving of the Ten Commandments, the call of Moses, and probably all those revelations designated in Genesis by the expression, "The Lord said unto him."

Exod. iii. 2; xx 1; Gen. xvii.

Dreams.

III. *Dreams.*—Under which is included whatever was addressed to the imagination only; whether the abstraction from a consciousness of surrounding objects was the effect of sleep, or of some supernatural influence, as in a trance or ἔκστασις. As instances of this class may be mentioned, Peter's vision of the sheet, St. Paul's revelation in the temple, Jacob's dream, and the like.

2 Cor. xii. 2; Acts x. 10; Gen. xxviii. 12.

Instinctive Impulses.

IV. *Instinctive impulses.*—This term is used to denote some method of making known the Divine will, which does not appear to have been an address either to the senses or to the imagination, but to have operated on the desires, affections, and other inclinations, as those other communications did on the senses or the imagination. Such may we conceive to have been the method whereby Paul and his company are described in this journey as *hindered* by the Holy Ghost from pursuing a wrong course. By this, it may be, they were enabled to interpret Paul's vision of the man of Macedon to be of Divine origin. This too might have been what the disciples of our Lord experienced, when walking with him after his resurrection. For, although at the time they failed to attend to it, they afterwards expressed their surprise that they should have been so dull. "Did not *our hearts burn within us* as he talked with us?" Perhaps this mode of revelation, being then new to them, was not at once recognised.

Acts xvi. 6, 7, 9; Rom. i. 13.

Luke xxiv. 32.

These will include all the various revelations of God to man, for there is no other conceivable form, except where the mediation of some being is interposed; and *this* belongs to a distinct consideration.

All operated naturally.

To this general statement, the first remark to be added is, that in all the different methods, the senses and the imagination were probably affected only as in the ordinary course of nature—that the exercise of sight, of hearing, and of fancy, was in every case of the same kind as that produced by natural objects, natural sounds, and natural sleep. Thus Samuel is described as mistaking the voice of God for that of Eli; and another, more experienced, as desiring to

1 Sam. iii.

be certified by a sign, that the impression was supernatural, and being gratified in his desire as reasonable. Judg. vi. 17.

This being so, it follows that besides *the vehicle of communication*, whether voice, vision, or dream, some *sign of confirmation* must always have been provided, in order to satisfy the person visited, that he was not imposed on, or else imposing on himself—imposed on, as in the case of "lying spirits," or of human contrivances, or of accidental phenomena; imposing on himself, as in the case of enthusiasm. Not that in all, or in most instances, any *record* will be found of the sign of confirmation; because the revelation alone concerns those to whom the records of the event are addressed—the sign, the persons visited. Still it is in many instances mentioned. In some indeed it was unavoidable; whenever, namely, the same display served the double purpose of confirming sign and vehicle of communication, as in the case of the handwriting addressed to Belshazzar. In some cases, again, the two are connected together, so as to form what is called in loose phrase one vision. Of this kind was that which occurred at St. Paul's conversion. The voice alone was the medium of communication; while the light served to certify that it proceeded from no human lips.[59] The same may be observed of the call of Moses at the bush. Sometimes also the two were so joined, as that the sign should not become proof until afterwards; it being in this case a sort of prophetic appendage. Of this kind was Zacharias's revelation respecting John the Baptist, that of Cornelius concerning his own admission into the Church, and the like. The last case is where the two were disjoined; and then the confirmation might be effected in some distinct revelation, or by specific miracle. Thus the budding of Aaron's rod was a sign of confirmation to Aaron, and the miracle of the fleece to Gideon. Thus, too, the power of working miracles, granted in all ages to the messengers of God, were signs not only to those to whom they were sent, but to themselves also, that they were really so commissioned. It is probable, that with those who were in the habit of receiving frequent communications, a miracle in every case might not have been requisite; or if any, merely what has been described as an instinctive impulse, such as was supposed to have confirmed St. Paul's view of his vision at Troas. Certain it is, that he is said on that occasion to have acted "*immediately*" on the authority of the vision. The word is introduced, as if for the purpose of marking a case in which no further sign of confirmation was waited for. Perhaps, then, the vision alone was sufficient for one like St. Paul, thoroughly *accustomed* to the Divine communications. For although it is true that this mode of operating on the senses or imagination was apparently the same, as if ordinary and natural causes were operating;

Signs of confirmation.

Dan. v. 5.

Acts ix. 3–5.

Ex. iii. 2, 4.

Luke i. 11; Acts x.

Num. xvii 8; Judg. vi. 37.

Acts xvi. 8, 10.

[59] It is often asserted, that St. Paul then saw the Lord. But this could not have been the case. He was immediately struck blind, and the manifestation of Christ, of which he speaks, took place subsequently in the *Temple at Jerusalem*.

still, the eye, the ear, or the mind, would become familiarized to these; as to any other sounds, sights, or even dreams. The experience of many may be appealed to, for the fact, that dreams do recur, and are remembered as repetitions of former dreams. Now, a dream ascertained to be divine, might contain some peculiarities which would, doubtless, be remembered so vividly, as by repetition to stamp a sure character on the class of dreams in which they were recognised. Thus, when Samuel is represented, (in the instance already noticed,) as ignorant of the nature of the heavenly call, the expression of Scripture is, that "he did not yet know the Lord;" the natural interpretation of which seems to be, that he had not yet become acquainted with the voice by experience. In like manner, Adam is said to have "known" or recognised the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden. That even in these cases it might have been the duty of the inspired to wait for a confirming sign,—suppose such only as the instinctive impulse or prohibition,—and that for neglecting to do so they might have been sometimes misled, as in the case of Balaam, is not important.

1 Sam. iii. 7.

Gen. iii. 8,10.

Numb. xxii. 20, *et seq.*

Modes by which a Revelation of God is conveyed.

This topic has been already more than sufficiently dwelt on for our immediate purpose; and yet it leads to a consideration so important to Christian faith, that it is difficult to refrain from pursuing it a little further. Has the reader ever attempted to state to himself distinctly what he understands by the term revelation, meaning a revelation of the Divine nature? Neither the voice, the vision, the dream, nor the instinct, can be said to be God. All are evidently vehicles, and modes of communicating his messages to man. "Him no man hath seen at any time." Suppose, then, we wished to convey a *description* of an object of sight to one born blind; (for that is our condition in relation to the Divine-nature;) he may perhaps be made to receive some indistinct idea of it through his sense of hearing; and the vehicle of this revelation, as it may be termed, would be a voice. Some contrivance may be afterwards invented, which should convey to him the same description, by submitting to his touch figures representing it, or, as is done in some asylums, by letters and words strongly impressed on card, so as to be distinctly felt. If it had so happened, that he was at length favoured with the gift of sight, (as occurred with some in the miraculous period of the Church,) that same description might be set before his eyes in a painting. Meanwhile, suppose him never yet to have witnessed the object itself, thus variously represented. He would then have become acquainted with it in three distinct ways, and have been enabled to improve and to apply his knowledge of it by means of each; still, he would hardly be absurd enough to make either of these assertions,

John i. 18.

1. That the sounds, the figures, the writing, or the painting, were the very thing described.

2. That the variety in the mode of conveying the description

implied any corresponding distinction in that one object, the idea of which was thus variously communicated to him.

Is the reader sufficiently assured of the truth of these remarks, to apply them to the descriptions man has received of the Divine nature? God has been *omnipresent*[60] from the beginning, and cannot be supposed at any time to be more in one place than in another. Yet it has pleased Him from time to time to "lift up an ensign," to which men might come to ask for communication of his will, and to be made sensible of his presence. Such was the Shechinah granted to the Israelites, from between the Cherubim, where God is accordingly said to have *dwelt*. With this flame the voice or other vehicle of communication was so connected, that the priest was obliged to come to the former, in order to avail himself of the latter. The flame was the *sign*; and besides this there was the voice or other channel of revelation. It afterwards pleased the Most High to set up an ensign for all the world to resort unto, even "for the nations afar." This ensign was, the Human-nature of our blessed Lord. To Him, all were now to come who desired to receive the Divine communications. His words and symbolical miracles, and other acts, formed the vehicle of that communication —as much so, and in like manner, as the voice which gave the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, or which spoke at different times to Adam, to the patriarchs, to the prophets, and others his servants of old. Hence it is written, that "the *Word* was made flesh and dwelt among us," and that "men beheld his *glory*," in allusion to the analogy between Him and the Shechinah. Hence, too, the occasional radiant appearances which could not fail to have suggested to Jewish witnesses the symbol of Divine manifestation. At the same time it must be borne in mind, that the incarnation of the Son of God differed from all other modes of Divine communication, in that Christ did not only represent, personate, and manifest God, but man also. Hence he is called the "only Mediator;" and with reference to this peculiarity it is, perhaps, that St. Paul speaking of him says, "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one;" *i. e.* Christ as Mediator is at once the mean of communication from God to man, and from man to God—the representative of both

Ex. xxix. 43.

Isaiah v. 26.

John i. 14.

Gal. iii. 20; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[60] In truth, *omnipresent* is a relative term. God is said to be omnipresent, because all things are *present to him*, not because he is *present to all things*. The original error consists in assigning him *any place at all*,—in attributing *locality* to a Being who cannot be affected, as we are, by *the distinctions of space*. The same may be observed of eternity, as applied to the Divine nature. We can only judge of time by a *succession of impressions on the mind*; and it is usually by supposing an infinite succession that we arrive at our notion of eternity. But why should we presume to say, that any such *succession* is requisite for the Divine mind? A savage would instruct a traveller in his route, by a *successive* enumeration of point after point, and line after line in his course; a civilized man would do the same *at once*, by placing a map before him. If then human nature exerts itself so differently, as it is cultivated or neglected, how cautious should we be in framing analogies between the energies and capacities of the most perfect mind, and of God who formed it!

—God in person, and also Man in person; nevertheless, as God, He is one.[61]

Permanent Revelation of God to Christians.

But the Almighty has not limited his modes of communication to sensible objects, to voices and visions. He has also addressed himself *immediately* to the mind, to the affections and understandings of men. In this kind of communication effected by the Spirit, the vehicle is not material, nor an object of the senses. Its effects, indeed, have been made visible in the miraculous gifts of the apostles, and in the prophetic monuments of the Church in all ages; its effects we still see in the behaviour of individuals and of nations, and still hear, in those sounds which are going forth into all lands; but, according to our Lord's illustration, like the wind, we cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth.

For us is this mode of Divine communication appointed. To us the Spirit speaks, as the man Christ Jesus did to his followers; as the voice or vision from between the cherubim addressed itself to them of older time; as, in short, each different organ of communication hath spoken at sundry times to the several generations of God's people; for He, says the apostle, hath spoken "in divers manners." But then, where are we to seek for the appendage to this, as to the other appointed and regular vehicles of Divine communication? Where, asks the Christian, is our Shechinah? Where the ensign to which is attached this unheard voice, this unseen vision? To be sure it may be said, that God is not to be found here or there, but is omnipresent. So He was before the flame of the Shechinah was lighted, or the Word was made flesh; nor was He less so during either manifestation. It is not his presence, but the *sign* of his presence we ask for. To the Heathen themselves, from whom the Jewish ensign was removed, He was indeed present,— "not far from any of them," as their apostle told them; but it is the privilege of his peculiar people to have this Sign to resort to. See then, Christian, whether we have it not as distinct and as accessible, nay, more accessible and more distinct, than ever before was given. Remember, that the mode of communication is no longer by sound or by sight,—no longer a sensible medium, but spirit. The corresponding *ensign*, also, is not addressed to the *eye* nor to the *ear*, but to the *mind*. It is not a flame, which, however brilliant, illumines only the holy of holies. It is not a man, whom only a small portion of the human race can see, and hear, and follow. But it is, what better suits an unlimited dispensation, it is a MIRACULOUS RECORD. The Bible and the Sacraments are our Shechinah, our Sign; not, indeed, to be recognised as such by gazing at them, lifting them up, and carrying them about; but by humbly reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting. We, unlike God's people of old, walk by faith, and not by sight.

Heb. i. 1.

Acts xvii. 27.

[61] The text is a difficult one, and no interpretation given of it is perhaps free from objections; the term Mediator is generally referred to Moses.

It appears, then, that besides the occasional communications made by God to his servants and to others, he has, in the course of his ordinary and perpetual dealings with his Church or people, appointed three distinct modes of communication, whereby he was to be accessible to those who should seek him; and that appended to each was the sign of his presence in such modes of intercourse. To prevent the error of attributing the Divine agency to three different Beings, in consequence of this difference, we are instructed in the Unity of God, and baptized in his name as the Father, in his name as the Son, and in his name as the Holy Ghost. Again, as under this threefold dispensation, we observe that the Almighty has in each manifestation assumed to himself certain characteristics, we presume not to confound God the Father who created us, with God the Son who redeemed us, and with God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us; but, agreeably to the sense and language of the Christian Church from the earliest times, we worship Him as one in three Persons.[62]

ST. PAUL AND THE PYTHONESS.

Acts xvi. 16.

Concerning our knowledge of the Evil Spirit.

The foregoing remarks may serve to guide us in another question; that, namely, concerning the knowledge we possess of the evil Being. With his origin and his absolute nature we are wholly unacquainted. Our view of him, like that of the Author of all good, is chiefly negative. Whence he too is called a spirit; that is, his real nature is incapable of being perceived by our senses; and even the modes whereby he has been manifested to us are accommodated, not to the sight, the hearing, or to any external perception, but only to the immaterial part of man. But, as God himself has vouchsafed so also to address himself to us, it was necessary, in contradistinction to Him, to designate the author of evil by the term *evil* spirit.

His extraordinary operations.

According to the Scriptures, he has been to us the author of those two original evils, the effects of which the whole world still daily experiences; sin and death. In perpetuating these, his ordinary and continual agency appears to have been ever exerted; as to counteract the effects of these, has been the objects of God's ordinary dealings with mankind. But the evil spirit has also displayed his *extraordinary* and *occasional* operations on the objects of his malice. He has sometimes vexed men's minds and bodies, as in the instances of Job, of Saul king of Israel, and of those who laboured under that peculiar malady which is called in the Gospels demoniacal possession. On the reality of these possessions some observations were offered, in treating of our Saviour's ministry, under the head of miracles, and under that of the temptation. But besides the infliction of pain and disease, which was there especially noticed, he seems to have exercised a power of delusion,—inspiring agents, over whom he had obtained control, to foretel future events.

His power of foretelling future events.

[62] See The Three Temples of the One God.

The most obvious, although by no means the only great mischief produced thereby, was, that to him were ascribed the power and praise which were due only to God. Foreknowledge was considered as a peculiar attribute of the Deity; and the Being therefore who enabled his agents to foretel events, was regarded as the one who ordained and dispensed them. Hence he is called in Scripture "the prince of this world," and "the father of lies." This by no means implies, that with demoniacal inspiration commenced the various superstitious arts which have obtained in the world, or that they were altogether kept up by this influence. It is more consonant with what is observed of the rest of the evil one's agency, to suppose, that finding these corrupt devices to have sprung out of his original depravation of man's heart, he ever and anon supported them by extraordinary interposition. Why this was ever permitted, the source of goodness being almighty;—why, indeed, such a Being ever existed, are questions which the inquirer of the present day has learned to consider in their true light, as vain, unprofitable, and presumptuous.

John viii. 44. xii 31; xiv. 30.

The Pythoness at Philippi.

During our Saviour's ministry, He often exercised his power over the former class of evil manifestations, namely, demoniacal possessions. Of the latter class none are mentioned, until we find Paul at Philippi exercising a similar authority over the possession of a Pythoness; a sort of fortune-teller, whose master made a gain of her gift, or rather of her curse; and who, regarded simply from the account of her way of life, might appear in the light of a common impostor. Her interview with the apostle, however, contains circumstances, which render it unquestionable, that in her case, as in that of the demoniacs, the agency of the devil was manifested.

Philippi was the first place in which Paul, after his departure from Troas, found "a door opened unto him;" and of the results of his ministry there, this miracle, and the conversion of Lydia, a devout Gentile, are the main circumstances recorded. It is worthy of remark, that in this, as in the cases which occurred during the Saviour's personal ministry, the evil spirit acknowledged in Christ the agency of the most high God. It was through *his* name still that these miracles were performed. Agreeably to the account which his commissioned servants gave him, whilst he was yet with them, "In thy name we cast out devils," Paul now addressed the spirit of divination, and found it, as Christ had foretold, obedient unto him.

Luke x. 17.

The believer hopes and expects to discover a beautiful propriety in every part of the Christian scheme; and where he does not perceive it, still he infers its existence. Thus, observing that of the two kinds of demoniacal possession, our Saviour frequently exercised his power in person over those afflicted with the malady so characterized, while the exercise of a similar power over those visited by a spirit of divination was reserved for his apostle to the Gentiles; one

is naturally prompted to look for some mark of propriety and consistency in the arrangement. Such may, perhaps, be found by contemplating the difference of character in the ministry of Christ, and of his apostles guided by his Spirit. It was the business of the former to *do the work* of redemption, of the latter *to instruct men in it*. The ministry of Christ, therefore, would be directed generally against all the evil and hurtful agency of the Devil; the ministry of the apostles more particularly against the propagation of falsehood. The former would naturally counteract the *works* of Satan; the latter his *words*, as conveyed through agents, such as was the rescued Pythoness.

It was during the apostle's third journey, however, that his success in this branch of his ministry appears to have been greatest. At Ephesus, among the eminent miracles (Δυνάμεις οὐ τὰς τυχούσας) which he displayed, some appear to have been of this character;[63] and to have operated so powerfully on the minds of many who witnessed them, that they came forward and burned publicly their books of magic. The high valuation of these, marks at once the extent of the evil, and also the wonderful success of the apostle. This whole portion of his ministry proves, too, that demoniacal possession was not, as some have hastily asserted, confined to the Jews.

ST. PAUL AT ATHENS.

Acts xvii.

The apostle and his company, when dismissed by the magistrates from Philippi, passed through Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Beræa; and in each left traces of their inspired agency. At Thessalonica, as we know from the Epistle soon after addressed to the converts there, their labours were remarkably successful, even among the idolaters. Athens is next in the list of places which received thus early a summons from the Holy Spirit to repent, believe, and be baptized. Athens was still the principal seat of learning, and of those arts which furnished the chief attraction of idolatry. It was the University of the Roman empire and of the world. At Athens therefore it might be expected, that argument, not force, would be opposed to the efforts of the Christian orator; and that on his part, as dealing with a people accessible in a high degree through their reasoning powers, the *words* more than the *works* of the Spirit would be employed. It is not, however, merely to point out the propriety of the Holy Spirit's ministry there—although, like every other instance, it affords a strong presumption of the truth of the Bible narrative, and ought not to be overlooked—but it is not merely on this account, nor yet for the sake of that interest which the name of Athens inspires, that Paul's arrival there

[63] The attempt of the Jewish exorcists to imitate Paul, proves that these cures were wrought, like that of the Pythoness, "in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Then certain vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them that had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure thee by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth."—Acts xix. 13.

is noticed; but on account of two circumstances which occurred while he was there, and which, admitting each of different views, may not be regarded at first by all in that which seems to be the correct one.

Paul attracts the notice of the Philosophers.

Preaching, in the first instance (as his custom was) to the Jews and devout Gentiles of the place, his discourses were so much noised abroad, as to attract the attention, not of the magistracy, but of the philosophical idlers. Idlers, I say, because at Athens these speculators formed a body of literary loungers, and presented in the porches and other places of public resort a whimsical scene of fashionable relaxation, of which the amusements and conceits were metaphysical and moral discussions. Surrounded by company like this, and possibly unable, from the variety and number of the questions addressed to him, to make his meaning understood, Paul was conducted—not as a criminal, for of this there is no intimation—but as the promulgator of a new system, to *Mars' Hill*, and was there desired publicly to explain his views. His speech, accordingly, bears no marks of a *defence*, nor was it followed up either by acquittal or condemnation,—by sentence from a court, or violence from the multitude. At his mention of a resurrection from the dead, the doctrine seems to have struck his audience as so monstrous and preposterous, that he could no longer proceed for the jests and witticisms which it occasioned. His speech is doubtless, therefore, only a part of what he intended to say to them, and what might thus have proved more generally effectual, had his auditors "had ears to hear" him out.[64] As St. Paul's examination has been most commonly represented in the light of a judicial proceeding, these remarks will not be useless, if, by determining more precisely the circumstances, they shall make his celebrated harangue appear more natural, and more fully adapted to the occasion. One consideration too should be borne in mind, that at Athens, the chief, if not the only, persuasive which he chose to employ was eloquence—the very weapon in the use of which the Athenians were most skilful. With *miracles* he had confounded the people whose boast was "an image that fell from heaven," and he now *pleads* for Christianity in the city of Demosthenes.

His speech at the Areopagus.

In the speech itself there is only one topic which will be noticed; it is the allusion to an altar erected to "the unknown God."

The unknown God.

Some few, who have considered St. Paul's behaviour here as an eminent illustration of the character which he has given to himself, of being "all things to all men," have so far departed from the common acceptation of the passage, as to imagine that "the unknown God" was no one particular object of worship which the

[64] "Some mocked, and others said, *We will hear thee again* of this matter." This may be understood to imply a division of sentiment among the auditory; some mocking him, so as to render it impossible for him to proceed; others, as Dionysius and Damaris, encouraging him, and telling him that *they at least would continue to hear him.*

Athenians had adopted; but the true God, whom, he tells them, they *ignorantly* worshipped in the various characters of Jupiter, Apollo, &c. To Jehovah (they understood him to say) are justly due your worship and your altars. It is not your Jupiter who is the God, but the Being who made the heavens or Jupiter.[65]

The objections to this interpretation are these: first, the apostle so expresses himself as clearly to denote that the words, "to God unknown," were inscribed on some altar;[66] secondly, respectable testimonies have been found of the existence of such an altar; lastly, it is not in accordance with St. Paul's other addresses on the subject of idolatry,—his custom being to point out to the heathen, not that they were worshipping God under false names, but serving the devil. 1 Cor. x. 20; 1 Tim. iv. 1.

It remains, therefore, to determine what particular God was meant by the inscription on the altar. On this point the remarks already made, on the occasion of the speech, may not a little help to guide inquiry. Nothing is more probable, than that the Athenians, the most inquisitive people on earth, should by this time have heard, and have taken some interest in the report, of a new God which the Christians were represented as proclaiming to the world.[67] In their characteristic vivacity and eagerness for novelty, an altar might have been erected to him, before they had ascertained his name. On Paul's arrival, their very conversation with him would lead them to surmise that he was one of the promulgators of this new religion. Hence the eagerness with which he was brought before the public, led purposely perhaps by this very altar, which would on that account be pointed out to him, and would form a natural topic for the opening of his speech.

It is scarcely necessary to add to these remarks, that the expression[68] "too superstitious," which is mistranslated, was meant, no doubt, as a compliment, and not as a reproach, by characterising the people as one who displayed a high sense of religion.

[65] Pope's creed, as expressed in his Universal Prayer, was no other than this:—

"Father of all, in every age,
In every clime, ador'd;
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, and Lord."

[66] Βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο, Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ.

[67] *Christo ut Deo carmen dicunt*, Plinii Epist. May not the remark, that Paul was a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached *Jesus and the Resurrection*, have arisen from his statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, in reply to some question put to him concerning the new God? The opening of his speech obviously falls in with this view. Having first declared him to be the same God who made the world, he was proceeding to speak of his manifestation in the flesh, *viz.* "the man whom he had ordained," when he was interrupted. Nor is this altogether unfounded conjecture. For, that Christ was represented as a strange God, worshipped by the Christians, is, I think, plain from the very terms in which Pliny describes the new sect. "They sing a hymn to Christ as to a God," which is precisely the remark of the Athenians respecting Paul, that he was "a setter forth of strange gods."

This then is at least plausible, whether we admit or reject the notion that the accomplished Christian orator was so misunderstood in the use of the term ἀνάστασις, (resurrection,) by an Athenian audience, as to leave the impression that he was discoursing of a goddess so named —a notion first suggested by Chrysostom, and adopted by many after him.

[68] Δεισιδαιμονέστερους.

Acts xviii.

ST. PAUL AT CORINTH AND CENCHREA.

Foundation of the Church of Corinth.

At Corinth the apostle made a longer sojourn than in any other city during his journey. Here were written his Epistles to the Thessalonians; perhaps that also to the Galatians. Here, too, he probably received from Aquila and Priscilla the first intelligence of Christianity having been preached to the Romans. Here, lastly, he founded that Church, which, above all others, engaged his personal interest. In the minute internal regulations of this, more than of any other, he appears to have busied himself; and, accordingly, his Epistles to the Corinthians contain more information on the Church discipline of the apostolic age than any other part of the New Testament. Indeed, in some few instances, the points alluded to have so much the character of domestic detail, as scarcely to admit of illustration from the general history of the times.

Paul's observance of Jewish rites at Cenchrea.

Corinth may be considered as the boundary of this apostolical journey, and the last regular scene of Paul's labours for the present. For, although we hear of him afterwards at Cenchrea, and again at Ephesus, his pause at the former place was only to perform a ceremony which he went through as a Jewish Christian; at the latter, to convey to the Asiatic continent Aquila and Priscilla. Cenchrea has, however, been particularized, together with Corinth, in order to remind the reader that St. Paul here exhibited a striking illustration of the general principle which guided the primitive Church, in regard to the observance of foreign rites and rules by its members. As a member of the Jewish society, about to visit his own people, and not as a Christian, or as performing any duty to God as such, St. Paul on this occasion observed a form wholly Jewish. On the same principle he anxiously hastened to be present at Jerusalem by the approaching festival, whilst he was insisting on the sinfulness of the Gentile convert, who should add to the Christian appointments the obligations of the Jewish law. Thus, too, he circumcised Timothy, because his father was a Jew; but, although he was in the very seat and centre of Jewish prejudice, in Jerusalem, and even while the question was hotly agitated, he refused to allow Titus, the Gentile convert, to be circumcised.

CHAPTER VI.

St. Paul's third Apostolical Journey.

From A.D. 55—60.

ROUTE.

Galatia; Phrygia; Ephesus; Asia; Ephesus again; Troas; Macedonia; Greece; Corinth; Macedonia again; Philippi; Troas again; Assos; Mitylene; Chios; Samos; Trogyllium; Miletus, (in Asia;) Coos; Rhodes; Patara, (in Lycia;) Tyre; Ptolemais; Cæsarea; Jerusalem. Acts xviii 23; xix. to xxi 15.

Of those places through which the route of the apostle in his third official journey is marked, Ephesus was the principal scene of his labours. In his return from Greece to Palestine, he had touched at Ephesus, and there left Aquila and Priscilla, with a promise that he would himself soon visit them. This promise he now fulfilled. Passing through Galatia and Phrygia, he made Ephesus, for the third time, his chief station in Asia, as on former occasions he had chosen Corinth in Greece. It was here, then, that all who dwelt in Asia, both Jews and Greeks, first heard the word from him. Among these may be numbered Epaphras, who not only became his convert, but probably his missionary to the neighbouring Colossians. Of all the incidents, however, which mark Paul's residence at Ephesus, the most interesting, perhaps, is his meeting with certain disciples of John the Baptist. Paul at Ephesus. Col. i. 7.

St. Paul and the Disciples of John the Baptist.

No mention is made by any of the Evangelists of the disciples of John the Baptist, subsequently to their master's imprisonment and death. Probably the greater part of them became followers of Jesus; having been indeed called and instructed by John to this very end. Some notice of this transfer might have been intended in the formal embassy on which he sent them to our Saviour, when he found his own removal from them likely to be at hand.[69] But before it actually took place, some might have quitted Palestine; and thus, although convinced by the preaching of Christ's forerunner, might have had no opportunity of attaching themselves either to Him or to the disciples of Him whose way their master had prepared. Such might have been the case with those, who, about

[69] Matt. xi. 2. See Appendix [F.]

twelve in number, were found by Paul at Ephesus. Apollos, one similarly circumstanced, had, before the apostle's arrival, received baptism from Aquila and Priscilla; and had already, from his eloquence and knowledge of the Scriptures, become eminently serviceable to the Christian cause in Achaia. As Apollos is said to have been of Alexandria, these others also might have come from the same place. Even so, their total ignorance of all that had occurred at Jerusalem during an interval of more than twenty years, on a subject which so nearly concerned them as the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the preaching and baptizing of the apostles; and this, too, notwithstanding their manifest expectation of the events, strongly confirms the remark formerly made, on the extreme tardiness with which intelligence of the several stages of the new dispensation was communicated, even between places the most connected by frequent intercourse. Between Alexandria and Jerusalem there was at this time nearly as much intercourse, as between the holy city and the remote parts of Judæa itself; and the Passover, at least, was yearly attended by numbers, with, perhaps, a more scrupulous punctuality than by the Jews who were resident in their native country.

Acts xviii. 24.

Acts xix. 2.

Difference between the Baptisms of John and Paul.

The rebaptism of these disciples of John the Baptist, first by Aquila and Priscilla, and, in a second instance, by St. Paul, suggests an inquiry into the difference between the baptism of John and that of Paul; which again leads us to ask, what was the difference between this last and that of Jesus Christ himself.

John baptized with water *only;* that is, there was no inward grace bestowed on the disciple through the ceremony. Baptism was only a sign of admission into the temporary society over which he presided; and as such, a pledge also that the initiated would conform to the rule of that society, repentance.

But, while John baptized, he pointed to the coming of Jesus, as of one who should "baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" meaning, that his *baptism* should be performed, with water indeed, but not with water *only*—that the *immersion* and *sprinkling* should not be merely the sign of admission into a society, or the pledge of conformity with rules, but the appointed means for imparting the Holy Spirit. It was really then a baptizing with the Holy Ghost, rather than with water; for the same reason as we should say, that he who was sent by the prophet to wash in Jordan was cured, not by the washing, but by the secret grace attached to it; or again, that it was not the clay on the blind man's eyes which restored him to sight, but the virtue which went forth from Jesus with the act of putting it on.

Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33.

"With the Holy Ghost," says St. John, therefore, "He shall baptize, and with fire;" that is, with the Holy Ghost, whose emblem and attesting sign shall be fire. He speaks of the flame which descended on the day of Pentecost, in proof of the true invisible descent of the Holy Ghost.

Such then was the baptism of Jesus, as distinguished from that of John. Jesus himself indeed baptized not, but such was the baptism of his followers. At the same time, an evident distinction obtains between this rite as performed by his disciples during his abode on earth, and as performed by those who after the day of Pentecost were enabled to fulfil his commission of baptizing, not only in the name of the Father and of the Son, but also of the Holy Ghost. It was, doubtless, owing to this very ground of difference, that they were forbidden to enter upon their duties until the descent of the Holy Ghost had taken place. For, until that event, they could neither impart that holy gift to the initiated, nor have properly baptized them into that name. It is plain, for the same reason, that whatever baptisms took place during our Saviour's ministry must have been similarly defective. And yet it would seem, that to that stage of Christian baptism more especially John's words relate, "*He* shall baptize you," &c. And, doubtless, they are to be so understood. The baptism of Jesus, during his abode on earth, was defective; no more internal grace was conveyed at the time through it than through John's. But this was in conformity with the character of Christ's whole ministry. It was imperfect *for the time*, but so framed as to become perfect afterwards. Those whom he baptized by the hands of his apostles and of the seventy were in one sense incompletely baptized; because the most important effects of the ceremony did not in these instances immediately follow the performance of it. Still, when he sent the Holy Spirit on them, he may be said to have himself completed their baptism; which was thus more honourable than any others could boast of receiving. With them the giving of the Holy Ghost was not by the agency of human ministers, but immediately by their Lord and their God. Being baptized, too, by a manifestation of the Holy Ghost, these had no more need to be rebaptized unto that name, in addition to the form wherewith they had already been admitted as disciples, than had the apostles to be baptized unto Christ, when called by him in person. The presence of the Divine Being in each manifestation, superseded and implied all that could be intended by specific baptism unto that name, which, in each case, designated the Person of the Godhead then present. None of Christ's disciples, accordingly, were rebaptized after the descent of the Holy Ghost;[70] but with John's, the case was widely different. On the present occasion it is particularly recorded, that Paul explained to them the difference, baptized them in the Christian form, and imparted to them the Holy Ghost, testified by the gift of tongues and of prophecy.

Luke iii. 16; John i. 33.

[70] Tertullian mentions certain freethinkers of his day, who argued from this fact, that either Christian baptism was not necessary to salvation, or else the apostles were not saved.—*De Baptismo*, C. 12.

COLLECTIONS FOR THE POOR OF JUDÆA.[71]

So repeated mention is made in the Epistles of St. Paul, of contributions for the relief of the Christians of Judæa, that it may be useful to notice this subject also in connexion with the apostle's stay at Ephesus. Whilst he was preparing to make excursions alone into other parts of Asia, for the purpose of confirming converts in the faith, Timothy and Erastus were despatched to Macedonia, to urge the claims of the necessitous brethren, and to hasten the contributions, so that he might find them ready on his arrival there. It may be necessary to remind the reader, who inquires why the Christians of Judæa especially should need this assistance, that, according to the prediction of the prophets at Antioch, they had been distressed by a general scarcity of provisions, and that this was only a continuance of those charitable efforts, of which Antioch had set the example. It will be observed, however, that St. Paul advocates the cause of these his distressed brethren, not on the principle of mere benevolence, but as a *peculiar Christian duty*. With a view, then, of elucidating this principle, and thereby explaining the true character of the numerous passages which refer to it, the subject has been noticed.

Unity of the Spirit.

Our Lord had, with peculiar emphasis, told his disciples, that he gave them one new commandment, which was to love one another. This was the first precept which was given to them as a separate society. That it had reference only to their disposition and behaviour towards each other as members of such a Body, is evident. Else, the commandment could not be called new; inasmuch as his frequent injunctions to humility, and forgiveness of injuries, had much better title to this peculiar and emphatic appellation. So considered, the commandment was altogether new, because the object was new, the circumstances out of which the obligation arose were new. Of its solemn importance, and of its further enforcement by the Holy Spirit, under the expressions of "unity" and "unity of the Spirit," it is at present unnecessary to speak. Enough has been said to render the principle easily applicable, and, in the present instance especially, to mark its connexion with St. Paul's earnestness, in urging the contribution on the brethren of every place *as a peculiar Christian duty*.

This, then, was the first occasion which was afforded to the whole Church of manifesting their social love,—of evidencing the unity of the Spirit; and as such we must consider the apostle to be representing it. In order to be satisfied of this, we need only refer to one or two of the apostle's injunctions, and either place them side by side with our Saviour's commandment, or consider them alone. Thus, the Lord had said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye

John xiii. 34, 35.

[71] Acts xviii. 22, compared with 1 Cor. xvi.

love one another. As I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The apostle in speaking of the contribution calls it "*the experiment*," or "test," by means of which they glorify God for their professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ. To the Galatians, before this, he had expressly sent a charge to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who were of the household of faith." Those words of another apostle, too, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth *his brother* (τὸν ἀδελφὸν, not πλησίον) have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how *dwelleth the love of God in him?*" seem cast, as it were, in the mould of the original commandment, "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another;" and renders it almost unnecessary that the writer should inform us, as he has done, that it is to that commandment he is alluding.

2 Cor. ix. 13.
Gal. vi. 10.
1 John iii. 17.
John xiii. 34.

ST. PAUL AND THE CORINTHIANS.

Acts xviii.

Before we accompany the apostle to another stage of his journey, I would advert once more to his connexion with the Church of Corinth. The occasion is not unsuitable, because from Ephesus was written his first Epistle to the Corinthians, the design of which in part has been already noticed. His second followed after no very long interval.

Authority of the Governors of the Church.

It would of course be incompatible with the scale of this inquiry, to discuss generally the matter and character of these Epistles. Mention has been made of them with no further view, than to remind the reader of the tone of authority which the apostle assumes in them, over the offending members of the Church to which they are addressed; and this, not as vested in him alone, but as exercised by the governors of that Church. There, indeed, it would seem to have been properly lodged; for he would willingly, as he writes, have spared himself the task of interposing his extraordinary right as apostle, in order to enforce a discipline which of themselves they were competent to preserve, and which, as the event shows, they did maintain without his further interference.

1 Cor. v.; 2 Cor. ii.

About the same time also, (as may be inferred from his first Epistle to Timothy,) Alexander and Hymenæus were made examples to the Church, of the right vested in its governors of punishing its members. Some few remarks on the nature and origin of this right, therefore, may not be inappropriate here. As, in each instance, the sentence is styled "a delivery of the person unto Satan," the true import of that expression also should be determined.

1 Tim. i. 20.

Its origin.

That no society can exist without some rules, and without some means of enforcing obedience to those rules, is obvious. When therefore it is asked, whether Christ or the Holy Spirit left any ecclesiastical laws, or vested any where power to enforce those laws —if the question is put with a view to ascertain whether Church

government be of Divine origin, it is idle; inasmuch as the very institution of the ecclesiastical society, the Church, implies the design that rules should be established, and means provided to enforce them.

But another object may be intended by the question. It may be put with the view of ascertaining what those rules are, whereby this society, the Church, is designed to be governed. For, it may be said, and plausibly enough, that granting the intention of the Church's founder to have laws established, to be ever so apparent, how are we to know *what kind of government* he intended?

On one point the inquirer must satisfy himself. If, from the nature of the Church, and from existing circumstances, the members were already possessed of the means of acquiring this knowledge, in that case neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit would be likely to leave any code of ecclesiastical laws; on precisely the same principle, as no code of ethics was left.

Ecclesiastical offences.

Now, is there any thing in the nature of the Church to guide us, as to what are ecclesiastical offences? Undoubtedly there is. In every society there must be such a principle; and by reference to it in each, are formed laws for the government of each. Every society recognises peculiar offences, arising out of, and depending solely on, the peculiar nature of the society; so that in proportion as this latter is understood, the former are defined. Much mischievous confusion in some instances arises from a want of attention to this connexion; and the attention is frequently diverted from it by the accidental circumstance, that the same act often becomes an offence against many societies. Thus, theft is at once an offence against the supreme Ruler of the universe,—against the political body of which the thief is a member,—against some certain class of society, perhaps, in which he moves, and so on. The act being one, it is only by reflection that we are enabled to separate the different views which render it in each case an offence, and in each of a different magnitude. Again, what becomes a crime because violating the principle of one society, may be none in another; if, namely, it does not interfere with the object proposed in the formation and preservation of that other society. Thus, the violation of the academical rules of our Universities does not render the offending member amenable to the laws of the land. Thus, too, the very conduct which recommends a smuggler or a robber to his confederacy, becomes an offence against the political body with which he is associated.

In order, therefore, to ascertain what are inherent offences or crimes in any society, it is necessary that we should know with what object or objects such society is formed. If information of this kind, then, be found in the sacred record, respecting the Christian society, ecclesiastical law by revelation was no more to be expected, than a code of ethics to tell men what their own consciences were already constituted by God to declare.

It is certain, however, that if the question need not be answered in the affirmative, in order either to establish the Divine origin of ecclesiastical government, or to determine what offences come under its cognizance, there is yet a third object which may be proposed in urging it. What *punishments* are authorized, in order to check those offences? Ought not these to have been specified? and, not having been specified, does the nature of the case here also supersede the necessity of a revelation, and enable us to know what coercion is, and what is not, agreeable to the Divine will? The inquiry, too, seems to be the more reasonable, because in looking to the methods by which various societies are upheld, we find the punishment even in similar societies by no means the same. Military discipline, for instance, in different countries, and at different periods, has been enforced by penalties unlike in degree and in kind. In different countries and ages, the social tie between the master and the slave has been differently maintained. All this is true, but still, in looking at the question so, we take only a partial view, and lose one important feature in the establishment of coercion,—the right.

And punishments.

Now, this right is either inherent in the society, or conventional, or both, as is the case in most confederate bodies. When the right is limited to what the society exercises as inherent and indispensable, —inherent in its nature, and indispensable to its existence,—the extreme punishment is, *exclusion;* and the various degrees and modifications of punishment are only degrees and modifications of exclusion. When the right is conventional also, (as far as it is so,) the punishment is determined by arbitrary enactment, proceeding from some authority acknowledged by all parties, (whether that authority be lodged in the parties themselves, or in competent representatives, or in other delegated persons,) and therefore styled conventional. Few societies have ever existed without a large portion of these latter. Hence the anomaly above alluded to, and hence too the vulgar impression, that all punishments are arbitrary, and depend solely on the caprice and judgment of the government. What is popularly and emphatically termed *society*, affords a good instance of the first; that is, of a social union regulated and maintained only by a right inherent. In this, excessive ill-manners and the gross display of ungentlemanly feelings are punished by absolute exclusion. According as the offence is less, the party offending is for a time excluded from some select *portion* of good society, or from certain meetings and the like, in which more particularly the spirit and genuine character of gentility are to be cherished. All its lawful and appropriate punishments are a system of exclusion, in various shapes and degrees.

Exclusion from itself an inherent Right of every Society.

Now it is obvious, that no *authority* is ever here appealed to in any case; because the right arises out of, and is inseparable from the society that exercises it,—is implied in the very existence of the

society. In like manner, when the Christian searches the New Testament for positive enactments against offences to which the Church may be exposed, and finds none, it cannot nevertheless be said, that the omission leaves the nature of the punishment arbitrary or conventional. It obviously sanctions those which are coexistent with the Church, and which must therefore claim the same origin and foundation as the Church itself. It does more, *it sanctions these exclusively.*

In applying these principles to the government of the Church, it is not intended to represent the subject as left wholly to be gathered from the nature of the Christian society, or as if no reference were found in the New Testament to particular points of ecclesiastical government. Not only does the case selected for consideration prove that it is otherwise, but many expressions and passages may be cited from other parts of Scripture, of similar import. All that is here asserted is, that these are only illustrations of, and allusions to, the principles of ecclesiastical society; which principles, thus exemplified and illustrated, are sufficient to direct us in all cases. So, (to allude once more to the analogous case of the Christian code of morals,) moral precepts may be found without number in the sacred volume, but they are employed only in *illustration* of the great Christian principles, which, thus acknowledged and sanctioned, were to be our guide.

The Jewish Temple a special Type of the Christian Church.

In determining the true nature and object of the Church or Christian society, no small assistance is derived from the emblematical character of its special type, the Jewish temple. It was formed for the residence of the Holy Spirit, to be the medium of its operations. Look through the scriptural marks attached to it, and this truth every where meets the eye. It may be recognised in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper;[72] and in those many mysterious allusions which lie scattered throughout the record of our blessed Lord's words, especially in the Gospel of St. John. His writings are indeed inexplicable, unless we assign such a meaning, not to a few remarkable passages, but to a train of recurring allusions to this abode of God amongst his people; allusions in this apostle's case perhaps the more frequent, because naturally suggested by the recollection of those holy moments, when he used to lean on the bosom of his Master. What other view will sufficiently explain the mysterious expressions of that prayer, which the Saviour offered up for his future Church, on his approaching separation from those who were to be the founders of it. "Neither for these alone (prayed he), but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one; *as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*" And again: "The glory

John xvii. 20, *et seq.*

[72] "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have *no life in you.*"—John vi. 53.

which thou gavest me, I have given them;[73] that they may be one even as we are one; *I in them, and thou in me*, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, *and make our abode with him.*" John xiv 23.

Reference of Ecclesiastical Punishment to this Type.

Here, then, is the principle by which all ecclesiastical discipline, by whomsoever exercised, must be regulated. To this, accordingly, St. Paul especially refers, when pointing out to the Corinthians, that what had occurred amongst them came under the head of ecclesiastical offences, and as such ought to be punished by the rulers of the Church. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "If any man destroy (or defile[74]) the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

All ecclesiastical offences, then, become such on the principle that they are inconsistent with the *residence* of the Holy Spirit in the Church, or with his *operations*. By this the apostles were regulated; much more, then, their successors. Ananias's visitation was the first instance of the infliction of ecclesiastical punish-

[73] Alluding to his promise of the Comforter, that gift for which He was to ascend on high in order that He might give it to man, and for which it was expedient that He should go away.

This *glory* is attributed to whatever, from time to time, was the appointed residence of the Godhead. As this residence was chiefly manifested by the symbol of light, the word glory expressed the light also.

When Moses desired to have a manifestation of the Lord, his request was, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." (Ex. xxxiii. 18.) In like manner, it is said that "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle," (Exod. xl. 34,) and "the house of the Lord," meaning the light from the cherubim.

Accordingly, when Isaiah prophesied of the manifestation of God in Christ, he says, "*the glory of the Lord* shall be revealed." (Isa. xl. 5.) And St. John, alluding to the prophet's vision, "these things spake Esaias, when he saw his *glory*," (John xii. 41;) and again, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt (or tabernacled) amongst us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."—John i. 14.

So, too, when Christ speaks of his Church, as the future residence of the Godhead in the person of the Holy Spirit, he expresses himself in allusions to this symbol; although that symbol was no longer to be given to a people destined to "walk by faith, and not *by sight*." His apostles continued to adopt the same language concerning the Church. St. Peter writes, "The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." (1 Pet. iv. 14.) St. Paul speaks of "Christ's glorious Church;" and, in his comparison between the Mosaic and Christian dispensation, the Divine presence in each is expressed in the same figurative language. "If the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, was *glorious*, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather *glorious?*" And, so continuing and explaining the image, he at length proceeds to say that we, the Church of Christ, are not only, as were the Jews, *spectators of the glory*, but its abode and resting-place, as it were. "But we *all* with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are *changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" —2 Cor. iii. 7—18.

The latter part of this sentence, in the original, is ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, καθάπερ ἀπὸ Κυρίου πνεύματος, of which the former words are, as Macknight observes, "an Hebraism denoting a continued succession and increase of glory," see Psalm lxxxiv. 7; the latter an expression shaped obviously in conformity with this Hebraism, of which it is an appendage and explanation; it was used to denote that he was not speaking of any *visible glory*, but of the Divine Spirit himself, of whose indwelling it had been the ancient symbol.

[74] Φθείρει.

ment, and it is expressly said to have been for an offence against the Holy Ghost. Certainly, to determine what behaviour constitutes an offence of this kind, supposes a knowledge of what is inconsistent with the abode of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and also what his operations are; and these are matters of revelation,—seen, doubtless, with more or less clearness, (as all other matters of instruction are,) in proportion as men exert their faculties to understand, and God sees good to bless that exertion.

Thus much may be sufficient, on the nature of offences against the Church, for the reader to understand the principle which renders them such; and it now remains to inquire, what are the proper penalties?

The same method will be adopted as in the former case, *viz.* first, to consider what practices would naturally result from the principles laid down; and then, to see whether the sacred writings contain or allude to such a system of coercion, as we may have been thus led to infer. It was observed, then, that *the inherent right* of every society is exclusion in its various gradations: that every society must possess this, but nothing beyond this, as an inherent right. Whatever other punishments are adopted by any society, must be founded on a right created by the permission of its members, if its formation was a matter of choice to them, or by the compelling persons, if it was a matter of compulsion. Now, apply this to the case of the Church. There is a society left by its founder without any penal code; and the question is, whether any right of punishment therefore is vested in it, and of what punishment? Exclusion, or excommunication, in all its shades and degrees, presents itself as a kind of penalty, the infliction of which is an inherent and perpetual right. Referring to the pages of apostolical history, we see every reason to conclude from the incidental allusions to ecclesiastical discipline, that such was the mode of coercion sanctioned by the infallible guides and founders of the Church. Our Saviour's direction had been, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; *but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*" To the Corinthian Church the apostle's rebuke simply is, "Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this deed *might be taken away from among you.*" And a little after he adds, in explanation of certain figurative expressions with which he had been illustrating the same principle, "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

Excommunication sanctioned by the Apostles.

Matt. xviii. 15—17.

1 Cor. v. 2, 11.

In the energetic language of the apostle on this occasion occurs the expression, "to deliver over the person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." In this, then, there would seem to be something more implied than mere excommunication. It is spoken of, too, as a sentence proceeding by peculiar right from himself, and not, as the other, from one vested in the Church as a body. Whether in the present instance it was executed, or only threatened, is not explicitly stated: that it was actually inflicted on Hymenæus and Alexander, and by St. Paul, is proved by his Epistle to Timothy.

Deliverance to Satan. 1 Cor. v. 5

1 Tim. i. 20.

Here, then, the inquiry concerning the right of punishment takes apparently a new turn. The inquirer having satisfied himself that the Church has the right of exclusion, as well from its nature as from the allusions to the exercise of such a right in the apostolical writings, perceives, in the course of his search, instances of punishment which seem to wear a different character, and looks for some different principle to which he may refer them. He recollects, that not only those above mentioned were delivered over to Satan by St. Paul, but, what is more unequivocally expressed, and more awful in its character, that Ananias, the first offender against the Church, was visited with death. And that there may be no misapprehension as to the nature of his crime, it is called an offence against the Holy Ghost—against him whose temple we are, as a Church. From the cruel and unholy practices which have defiled that temple of the all-merciful God, in the rash assumption of some other right than the right of exclusion, and to sanction which these instances have been alleged, the Protestant of the nineteenth century turns with abhorrence. He searches for any other principle and any other right in vain. Moreover, these very instances require only an humble consideration to set them also in the manifest light of cases of exclusion.

Death of Ananias.

To understand this, it is necessary to state what is meant by excommunication or exclusion from the Church. Evidently, it is not exclusion from any particular *place;* for the Church is not such; but from certain common privileges: *i.e.* from the benefits of the Christian covenant, or of some portion of it. And what were these benefits? They were spiritual, derived through communion and the prayers and rites of the Christian community. Deprive the offending member of these, and you delivered him over to the world from which he had been called and elected. Cast him out of the Church and kingdom of Christ, and he became again a subject of that kingdom over which the god of this world rules. Thus he was said to be *delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh—i.e.* that the fleshly lusts through which he had offended may be destroyed by the discipline. The principle was the same as that on which the Israelites were delivered to Babylonish captivity, and debarred their temple service.

The case of Ananias and Sapphira is not, perhaps, an exception. It was *final exclusion* from God's Church, accompanied by the *only sign which could prove that the spiritual punishment was final.* Why that offence was so visited is not now important. Most probably, (as was elsewhere suggested,) it was an attempt to elude the extraordinary suggestions of the Spirit; and if so, the more appropriate seems the extraordinary mark of spiritual punishment.

It is by no means necessary, however, to the correctness of the view here taken of ecclesiastical discipline, that the nature of Ananias's crime and punishment should be shown not to form any exception to it. Like the pardoning of the thief on the cross, it arose out of circumstances which cannot recur in the ordinary course of the world; circumstances not only extraordinary, but of those so characterised, the most solemn and important. The one was a remarkable specimen of mercy and forgiveness, and as such fitly appended to the scene in which God was exhibiting himself as our Saviour; the other, an awful instance of severity and punishment, and no less properly attached to the scene in which God was exhibiting himself as the Ruler of his people.

Second Epistle to the Corinthians. A.D. 57.

A further mention of those offenders in the Church of Corinth, whose case has furnished the ground for these remarks, is made in the apostle's second Epistle to that Church. In order that the matter might be settled without his personal interference, he prolonged his stay at Ephesus; expecting to hear a favourable account of the impression made by his first Epistle. Meantime, an occurrence took place which hastened his departure. In his former journey, the cure of the Pythoness excited the ill-will of her master, whose gains were at an end, and caused the first persecution of his party which originated with the idolatrous Gentiles. At Ephesus, the famous seat of the Temple of Diana, and "of the image which fell down from Jupiter," he was exposed even to greater danger, from the tendency of his doctrine to ruin all those trades which depended for their support on idolatry and false worship. Demetrius, a silversmith, entered into a combination with those of his own trade; and the tumult excited by the appeal made to the superstitious feelings of the multitude in behalf of their tutelary goddess, whose shrine they represented as likely to be forsaken, was with some difficulty appeased. St. Paul, after having been subjected to one night's imprisonment, thought it prudent to withdraw for the time, and to pursue his journey at once to Corinth. The prejudice, however, which now began to be awakened against Christianity, was not of a character likely to pass away with the occasion. Throughout the world, the livelihood of a portion of every community arose out of the sale of images, the decoration of temples, and, more than all, the rearing of victims for the festivals. In proportion as Christianity spread, this circumstance formed an increasing source of opposition in the idolatrous world, scarcely less active and

Acts xix. 35.

determined than that which was caused by Jewish prejudice among the more enlightened portion of mankind. The complaints and informations which from time to time were laid before the magistrates, against this "pestilent sect," as it was termed, although made under the various pleas of loyalty, patriotism, or piety, originated, for the most part, as in the case of Demetrius, out of self-interest. Pliny, whose account deserves credit as an official document, and as the result of an investigation made by a highly-gifted mind, evidently saw through all this; and accordingly he mentions, as the best proof and symptom of returning order and content produced by his measures, that the victims were once more brought to market, and that the altars blazed. As yet, however, the Church was too insignificant to attract the notice of the imperial government, although the tumult at Ephesus proves that it was spreading fast.

It was not until St. Paul's arrival in Greece, that he received any tidings of the Corinthians; to whom he immediately addressed his second Epistle, to prepare them for his coming. To Corinth, accordingly, he proceeded, and made it, as before, the boundary of his third apostolical journey. It is not, however, improbable, that, but for his anxiety to be at Jerusalem in time for the approaching festival, he would now have attempted to pass over into Italy, and visit Rome. The information which he had received respecting that important Church, could not but have rendered him anxious to perform his errand as soon as might be amongst them. His Epistle to it, written from Corinth, amply testifies this; and explains the cause of his anxiety. Converted as it would seem by Jewish Christians, whose eyes were not yet open to the true nature of St. Paul's mission, they had received the same erroneous impression respecting the obligation of the old law on the converted idolater, which still prevailed in the great body of the Church at Jerusalem. Accordingly, the whole tenor of his Epistle bespeaks an anxiety to remove this mistake; and the strong terms in which he has, naturally enough, advocated the independence of the Gentiles, by speaking of them as, equally with the Jewish people, "elect" by the foreknowledge of God, are as remarkable for the perverse interpretation which is often put on them, as for the striking transcript which they present of the apostle's anxious zeal, in endeavouring to effect by letter what circumstances prevented him from doing in person.

ST. PAUL AND THE EPHESIAN PRESBYTERS.

Acts xx.

Increased dangers of St. Paul.

St. Paul's company on his return was increased by the addition of those deputed from the several Churches to convey their respective contributions to Jerusalem. It was a journey of no small risk. Independently of the prophetic bodings with which the Holy Spirit addressed him by sundry individuals as he passed onwards, he could not but feel that his mission to the Gentiles had rendered his life

unsafe any where among his countrymen. And what could he expect at Jerusalem? His very departure from Corinth was marked with plots against him, which obliged him to change his intention of going by sea, and to retrace his steps through Achaia and Macedonia. Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, and Miletus, formed the next line of his course; and by this time the feast of Pentecost, at which, for some reason, he earnestly desired to be present, was so near as to render it impossible that he should visit Ephesus, which he thought it equally incumbent on him to do. To obviate this difficulty, he requested the attendance of the Ephesian Elders or Presbyters at Miletus; a circumstance which is here noticed, because in the interview which thereupon took place, he reminds them that the Holy Ghost had made them Bishops, (ἐπισκόπους,) a term which has not before occurred in the sacred narrative. Having, in the last section, examined into the nature of offences against the Church, and of the penalties due to them, I shall take this occasion of inquiring, with whom the power of inflicting and remitting these penalties was lodged; and not only this power, but all other authority and administration, whether supreme or subordinate.

Episcopi.

Inquiry into their institution and offices.

One previous caution may, perhaps, be requisite. Various objections have been urged from time to time against our Church government, against the three orders of the Church, and the functions which they respectively exercise. To answer these merely by an attempt to prove their existence in the apostolical age, and their scriptural sanction, is to allow the objector an unfair advantage, and to submit our own minds to an unfair view of the question. The proof of the contrary rests with those who object. We find these matters so established, and tracing them further and further back, we still find evidence of them, without any coincident marks of human innovation. Tried by the touchstone of Scripture, they are found to be at least not inconsistent with its records; and therefore it would be a wanton and dangerous exercise of the Church's discretionary power to annul them. This was the spirit of the Reformation in England; and on this principle it has taught us, Thus far shalt thou go, and no further.

There are two questions which, in a discussion of this point, require distinct consideration. The first is, What were the orders of the primitive Church? The second, Were they intended altogether, or partly, or not at all, as models for the formation of ecclesiastical establishments of after-times?

As to the first question, it may admit of a different answer from different periods of the apostolical history; inasmuch as the Church economy was certainly not framed at once, but rose progressively with the exigencies of the Church. At the very period on which we are now dwelling, it is obvious, that the term Bishop and Presbyter were not only applied to the same order, but that no order of ministers (setting aside the apostles) was generally established,

superior to the presbytery. At a later period in the apostolical history, the same assertion would be altogether untenable.

The assembly, or ἐκκλησία, must, from its nature, have been the only order, besides that of the apostles, on the first attempt of the Christians to act as a society. All Christians composed this body, and the term, in short, signified the Church. But whether this general assembly at any period exercised any elective, legislative, or other powers, may perhaps be questioned. No doubt the Church or Assembly is mentioned as taking part with the presbyters in the elections and enactments; but when we consider the immense concourse, which a general meeting would suppose in the very earliest times, is it likely that any one *private room* would be found capable of containing all? On the other hand, is it likely that in Jerusalem, especially, so large a multitude would be permitted to meet *in public*, openly discuss their affairs, and take measures for the support and propagation of obnoxious doctrines, when even individuals were exposed to continual risk in their preaching and other ministry? The meetings of Christians for purposes of prayer, and other devotional exercises, must, for the same reason, have taken place in different houses assigned for the purpose. And this (as has been before observed) may illustrate the expression used by the historian in his account of Paul's search after the disciples "in every one of the houses," (κατὰ τοὺς οἴκους;) which, no doubt, implies, that he obtained information concerning their several places of meeting, and by going from one to another at the time of prayer was sure of apprehending some. The same allusion may be perceived in St. Paul's expression of "the Church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla," &c. Such a division of the Christian body into separate congregations would require the appointment of some one, at least, to preside over and officiate in each; and also of some one or more subordinate ministers or deacons, such as have been before noticed. When, therefore, we read that a decree was made, &c., by the apostles, presbyters, and the whole Church, one of two things must be supposed to have taken place: either the presbyters took each the sense of his own congregation; or the presbyters and other official persons, it may be, met as the representatives, each of his own congregation, and all of the Church collectively.

Acts viii. 3.

1 Cor. xvi. 19.

The former supposition is certainly encumbered with more and greater difficulties than the latter. The subject proposed at these Christian meetings seems, from the tenor of the narrative throughout, to have been then first presented to the Church in any shape; and the decisions took place before the meeting was dissolved. There are no marks of any previous notice of the matter to be discussed, so as to enable the several presbyters to consult the opinions and wishes of their constituents; and the decision took place without any interval to allow of an after consultation.

Against the remaining supposition, namely, that the presbyters

and other official persons, perhaps, met as the plenipotentiaries each of his own body, the strongest obstacle lies in the phrase, "It seemed good to the presbyters with the whole Church." Now this expression, after all, may imply no more than that it seemed good to the presbyters, and whatever other members of the Council, in conjunction with them, may be called the whole Church, because appointed to represent it. In like manner, when the Council of Jerusalem declared respecting their famous decree, that "it seemed good to them *and* to the Holy Ghost," our knowledge of the relation in which these stood to one another, prevents all doubt; but the expression itself, without any such clue, would make it questionable, whether the Council and the Holy Spirit were not recorded as two separate sources of the ecclesiastical authority from which the decree had emanated. Now the sentences on which we ground our conjectures respecting the authority of the whole Christian body, are precisely so circumstanced.

Acts xv. 22.

Acts xv. 28.

Apostolical origin of Episcopacy.

The appointment of deacons has been elsewhere discussed, and the origin of the presbytery has been now suggested. The order of bishops therefore only remains to be accounted for. At the period of St. Paul's summons to the Church of Ephesus, no such order could have existed there; and, if not in so large and important a Church, probably no where. The *title* cannot imply it, for it is one used for all the presbyters of Ephesus; and their number proves that he was not addressing bishops, for they came from one Church. Again, although the word occurs elsewhere in St. Paul's Epistles, it cannot mean an order of men in whom the chief authority was vested; because his Epistles are addressed to the Churches, as to assemblies in whom such authority was vested. The term bishop became afterwards appropriated to an order, of which we cannot infer the existence, certainly from any expression of St. Luke. How such an order should have arisen, it is not difficult to discover. St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus present us with at least its embryo form. Not only are both commissioned to ordain ministers, to determine matters left undetermined, and to inflict ecclesiastical punishments, even to excommunication; but their respective dioceses are distinctly marked out. Ephesus was assigned to Timothy, Crete to Titus. At the same time it would certainly seem that, in Timothy's case especially, the appointment was rather that of *locum tenens* for the apostle, and so far a temporary office. But this, far from being an objection to the apostolic authority of episcopacy, really supplies us with the clue to trace its origin and object. What was needed for a time at Ephesus or Crete, in the temporary absence of the presiding apostle, would be permanently requisite, when death for ever deprived these Churches of apostolical superintendence. The same cause, in short, which produced the appointment of presbyters, continued, as the number of congregations in each Church increased, to render the rise of a new order

1 Tim. v. 22; Titus i. 5; iii. 10.

1 Tim. i. 3; Titus i. 5.

equally necessary. A small presbytery, occasionally visited by an apostle, might not require a head; but a large one, especially as the apostles were removed by death or accident, would soon feel this want. That such an order was required before the close of the apostolic era, the then state of Christianity would render of itself nearly certain. Although at the time of the appointments of Titus and Timothy they may not have been general, yet when St. John wrote his Revelations, each of the seven Churches of Asia had its own bishop. And if this were so in that district, which then alone enjoyed the guidance of an apostle, much more was it likely to have been the case elsewhere. St. John, we know, addressed them as *angels;* but whether by a figure of speech, or because such was at that time their only designation, no candid mind can doubt that an episcopal order is intended; and that to them, as such, commands and revelations were given by God through his last apostle.[75] Thus, episcopacy would seem to be the finishing of the sacred edifice, which the apostles were commissioned to build. Until this was completed and firm, they presented themselves as props to whatever part required such support. One by one they were withdrawn; and at length the whole building having "grown together into an holy temple," the Lord's promise was fulfilled to the one surviving apostle. He only tarried until God's last temple was complete, and the Lord's second "coming" unto it[76] had been announced by an especial vision.[77]

Eph. ii. 21.

[75] The genuine remains of the apostolic Fathers show, that during the age immediately following, official letters were addressed indifferently to and from "the Church," "the bishop and presbyters," and "the bishop," although the more usual form was still "the Church." But that this was then considered in the same light, as if the bishop of the Church alone had been specified, may be inferred from the first Epistle of Clement, which although called Clement's, by the united testimony of all who mention it, professes to be, and is in substance, an Epistle from "the Church of God at Rome, to the Church of God at Corinth." Polycarp's is addressed from "Polycarp and the presbyters with him" to "the Church of God at Philippi." Ignatius addresses two Epistles to the Smyrnæans, one to "the Church at Smyrna," the other to "Polycarp, bishop of the Church at Smyrna." And that this latter, no less than the former, was a letter to the Church, and not to its bishop personally, will be evident from the following passages in it: "Hearken unto the bishop, that God also may hearken unto you. My soul, be security for them that submit to their bishop, with their presbyters and deacons," Sec. VI. "Labour with one another, contend together, run together," &c.

[76] See Mal. iii. 1.

[77] The revelation to St. John, in the close of his life, presents several obvious points of connexion with the prophetic promise, that he should tarry until the Lord's coming. Throughout the Scriptures, and especially in our Saviour's language, the Christian Church is designated by the emblem of the temple. Its foundation stones, its corner stone, its holy of holies, its one high priest, are images familiar to the sacred writers. Nor is the connexion to be considered as fanciful, and merely founded on an accidental analogy, serving the purpose of illustrations. The temple, its uses, and its ordinances, were designed, like the other portions of the older establishment, as types of the new. It was, therefore, the image in which ancient prophecy represented the future Church. Of this last temple it was foretold, that its glory should surpass Solomon's; and into this it is that Malachi proclaimed the Lord's coming. *The final mode of Divine residence*, intended by this coming, commenced when the various parts of the Church were completed, and the extraordinary portions removed. St. John was permitted to see all ready for this before his death. He was permitted to do more. The future fate and history of that figurative temple was revealed to

There is still another point to be settled. Was this form of Church government intended to be perpetual, and universal,—is it enjoined on all Christian societies in every age?

Permanency of this Order.

On the one hand it may be maintained, that this arrangement having been originally made by the Holy Spirit, through which his office as governor of the Church was to be exercised, we have no right to alter it, any more than we are authorized to alter the means of grace, unless some positive permission can be shown; and that it is, moreover, a wicked presumption to suppose, that any other means, (however humanly probable,) would more truly obtain the object of Church government. As a reason why this form of Church government was not positively enjoined, it may be suggested, that it was not like an abstract doctrine or precept, the only safe mode of recording which is "the written word," but a matter *which is its own record.* Like the Mysteries of the heathen, it was a practical document; the daily and continual practice of the Church, perpetuated from one age to another, superseded all need of other record.

On the other hand, it may be urged, that as the constitution of the Church was only what was then most convenient for the support and propagation of religion, whenever that end may be better attained by any alteration or deviation, the innovators are acting up to the spirit of the original institution, and thereby are more truly followers of the apostles, than those who sacrifice the *object* to the observance of the *means*, which are only valuable as regards that object.

And, certainly, had it been intended that we should regard Episcopacy as indispensable to a Church, we should have had some scriptural record of the Institution, and some scriptural declarations of its being essential, as in the case of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We are not bound, by any Divine authority, to retain Episcopacy under all circumstances; but neither may we depart from it, as if the question was simply one of temporary convenience. The apostles did not leave the Christian world to determine how the churches were to be modelled and governed; they founded Episcopacy, and handed over the Christian communities so ordered to succeeding times. Those of other generations had not to form an ecclesiastical polity for themselves; they found one already settled. Now, considering how important the form of governing a Church may be to its efficiency as the channel of our gospel privileges, how important, too, uniformity of government to a certain extent—is, to the free intercommunion of Christians belonging to different Churches

him, at the time his Master came to announce the filling of it with his glory. The prophetic history is of course all that concerned us, the fulfilment of the promise only him. Yet he has not left the former without a memorandum, as it were, of the import of that revelation to him. The terms in which it opens are, "Behold he *cometh*;" and the close, "He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I *come* quickly: Amen. Even so, *come*, Lord Jesus."

—those who have altered existing arrangements have incurred a weighty responsibility. But, we may neither condemn them, nor acquit them. The judgment belongs to a higher tribunal than that of man. Still less may we say, that those who by birth or accident have become members of a church so remodelled, are not justified in adhering to it, or that it is not a Church and a genuine portion of Christ's kingdom.

Some departure in the form of government, from the pattern of the primitive Church, has necessarily taken place in every community, nor does this departure of itself imply presumption. A very large community, for instance, has every where required a new order above bishops themselves; and this need being manifest, the appointment of the archiepiscopal office is as purely consonant to the apostolical views, as that of subordinate bishops. It has arisen in the same way, and in compliance with a similar need to that which gave rise to the episcopal order, in the apostolical Church; namely, the increased extent and more complicated government of each Church. Thus, too, the appointment of catechists, once a branch of every Church establishment, was properly discontinued as soon as they ceased to be required; and as properly has been revived in our colonies, where their services are once more applicable. The choroepiscopi served, in like manner, to meet another occasional emergency.

No Church has ever more anxiously and conscientiously shaped its course by the spirit, and by the very letter of the apostolic precedents, than has the Church of England. And yet even that Church has found circumstances powerful enough to justify a deviation scarcely less momentous, in the transfer of supreme ecclesiastical authority to the civil magistrate. It is not merely a variation from the original architecture of Christ's holy building that constitutes disproportion and deformity. We must look also to the changing features of the scene around, and see whether these have not demanded corresponding alterations, and let these be the measure of our judgment.

ST. PAUL AT JERUSALEM.

Acts xxi.

Prophetic warnings to St. Paul.

St. Paul's interview with the Ephesian elders was rendered peculiarly solemn and affecting, from a feeling of which he himself partook, that death awaited him at Jerusalem.[78] Still he went on, and the prophetic warnings which pursued him, and the anxious entreaties of his friends, continued to confirm his fears, and to sadden his pilgrimage, without inducing him to discontinue it. On his arrival at Cæsarea, especially, Agabus came from Judæa, and, by virtue of his prophetic gift, told him expressly by symbol and

Acts xx. 16.

[78] This is another proof, that the prophetic spirit was not at his command, but dealt out to him by measure; and its suggestions perfectly distinguishable from other, even the strongest, impressions on the mind.

by word, that the Jews should bind him, and deliver him over to the Gentiles. So that he arrived at Jerusalem fully apprised of the persecution which he was to encounter, and uncertain whether his life would be spared or not. The terms of Agabus's prediction were more likely to portend death; for in that he was to be bound by the Jews, and delivered up to the Gentiles, the fate of his Lord and Master could not but recur to him, and seem likely to be now his own: nor was it, perhaps, any slight stimulus and support to him in his perseverance, that he seemed, in thus pressing on to Jerusalem, in spite of his own forebodings, and of the remonstrance of others, to be imitating him. The studious imitation of Christ, wherever any similarity of circumstances could be perceived and felt, forms a marked feature in the lives, not only of the apostles, but of the primitive worthies who inherited their tone of Christian feeling.[79]

He declares his Apostleship to the Idolatrous Gentiles.

On other grounds he had reason to surmise that his work was finished. His third apostolical journey was now ended, and the conversion of the Gentiles far enough advanced, to make it safe and expedient for him to communicate openly to the whole Church that secret, which had been hitherto confided to a select few. For this, probably, more even than to keep the feast, he had hastened his journey to Jerusalem. Whether the result of this open avowal would be the forfeit of life, might have been concealed from his prophetic view purposely to try him. At all events, the present might have seemed to him a seasonable period for the termination of his labours,—in all human probability it would be so. Hence the tender farewell, in which he had told the Church of Ephesus "he should see their face no more;"[80] hence his anxiety, even in haste, to pay them that parting visit; hence, perhaps, that very haste and urgency, that with the enlightened views of a Christian, indeed, but still with the patriotic feelings of one whose early habits had been moulded in the "straitest sect" of the Jews, he might once more keep the festival with his countrymen, and die. His Master's example might again, in this particular, have influenced the tone of mind which kept up his resolve to go on to Jerusalem. As he approached, what train of thought so natural and so cheering as the image of the blessed Jesus in *his* last journey to Jerusalem,—*his* earnestness to keep the passover there, unabated by the certain foreknowledge that he was to be bound by his countrymen, and delivered up to the Gentiles?

Such then was, probably, the frame of mind with which St. Paul disclosed to the rulers of the Church of Jerusalem the true nature of his extraordinary apostleship to the Gentiles, and the prosperous

[79] See the description of the martyrdom of Stephen and of James in the Acts. A similar remark applies to the account given of the deaths of Polycarp, Ignatius, and many more among the primitive Christians.

[80] Acts xx. 38. See note [78], p. 149.

result of three journies amongst them. Like the other marvellous disclosures of the mysteries of the new dispensation, it called forth that peculiar thanksgiving which is styled in Scripture, "glorifying God." Their joy and wonder were however immediately followed by a sense of the danger to which he stood exposed. One expedient suggested itself. It was proposed that he should join four Jewish Christians in performing the rite of purification in the temple. This, it was thought, would convince the Jews of the real design of his mission; namely, that it was not, as far as concerned their law, to forbid the Jewish Christians to observe it, but only the Gentiles, and especially the idolaters. So public and unequivocal a testimony of conformity to the Mosaic ceremonies, would, it was thought, remove the worst ground of enmity against him, and at least soften down the spirit of ill-will. It produced, however, a contrary result. His appearance in the holy place was construed into a design to defile it. Trophimus, a Gentile convert, had accompanied him from Asia. He and Paul were often seen together, and the former was recognised by some Jews from Asia. An outcry was raised that Paul had brought this Gentile into the temple itself. Lysias, the commander of the Roman garrison, was obliged to interfere, and rescue him from the fury of the multitude. In vain he obtained permission to address them from the steps of the castle, whither they were conducting him to imprisonment. Eloquence, even such as Paul's, conveying to them the avowal, that the kingdom of God was thrown open to Gentiles and idolaters, could only serve to exasperate them; and it was with much difficulty that he was preserved from outrage and death.

Acts xxi. 19, 20.

His Purification. Acts xxi. 23.

Here his trial, at least his uncertain apprehensions, ended. That night the Lord stood by him, and informed him, that he was appointed to bear witness to Him in Rome. In what manner the treacherous designs of his enemies were rendered subservient to this purpose, is well known. His appeal from the tribunal of Festus to that of Cæsar was made, not only with the view of defeating the stratagem devised for sending him back to Jerusalem, but in fulfilment of the command of the Lord delivered to him that night. In obedience to this, he embraced the early opportunity, thus providentially afforded, for his visit to the imperial city.

Acts xxiii. 11.

CHAPTER VII.

St. Paul's fourth Apostolical Journey.

From A.D. 63—66.

ROUTE:

Acts xxiii 31. to xxviii. Antipatris; Cæsarea; Sidon; Myra; Fair Havens; Melita; Syracuse; Rhegium; Puteoli; Appii Forum; Three Taverns; Rome; Italy; Spain; Crete; Jerusalem; Antioch in Syria.

St. Luke's narrative, as has been already observed, was very evidently composed with the design of recording the progress of the Holy Spirit's dispensation through its several stages: first, as confined to the Jews; next, as embracing the devout Gentiles also; and lastly, as unlimited in its application, and open to idolaters of every caste.[81] On this account it is, that the first part of his little history embraces the ministry of all the apostles; then is occupied chiefly with St. Peter, as the person selected by the Spirit for the first extension of the Gospel scheme; then it follows Barnabas and Paul through the next and last enlargement of the covenant, for the management of which they had been appointed; and, at length, is confined to the ministry of St. Paul, in whose hands it was left on the separation between him and Barnabas. With equal propriety, the account closes with the period, when the apostle of the idolatrous Gentiles, having formally announced the greatest mystery of the Gospel to the Church of Jerusalem, has arrived at the capital of the world, and the work has been commenced in the imperial city itself. His voyage thither is accordingly related with an unusual minuteness of detail: not only, perhaps, because of the miraculous circumstances which it embraces, but because it was preparatory to that which the historian considered the important boundary of his plan, his arrival and first ministry at Rome.

[81] Some intimations of this might be intended in the words, with which the Gospel opens, "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to *write in order*;" and with reference to this it is, perhaps, that we are told so pointedly in the 19th chapter of the Acts, ver. 21, "After these things were ended," (he had been recording the rapid progress which the Word was making, and how it "mightily grew and prevailed,") "Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there *I must go to Rome also*." Rome was the mistress and representative of the world; and when therefore the apostle had preached the Gospel there, our Saviour's declaration concerning that sign which was to precede the destruction of Jerusalem, might be fairly understood to have had its accomplishment. "This Gospel must first be preached in *all the world*."

ST. PAUL A PRISONER AT ROME.

Acts xviii.

Among the faithful friends and assistants who formed his company here, are recorded—I. Timothy, who came with him from Macedonia, and whose name appears joined with his in the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Acts xx. 4; Philip. i. 1; Col. i. 1; Philem. 1.

II. Luke, who had been long his constant companion, as appears from the form of his own narrative; and who is mentioned as still with him, in the Epistle to the Colossians, and in that to Philemon.

Acts xx. 5, 6. Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24.

III. Aristarchus, one of his fellow-travellers from Macedonia, and it would seem now his fellow-prisoner also, (Col. iv. 10.)

Acts xx. 4.

IV. Tychicus, another of his fellow-travellers, and his messenger to the Colossian Church, (Col. iv. 7.)

Acts xx. 4.

V. Lastly, Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, (Col. iv. 10,) who had now regained the esteem and trust which he forfeited on his first journey with Paul.

Advantages of St. Paul's situation.

The account given by Festus of his prisoner could not but have been favourable; as he was permitted to lodge in a "hired house," with free access to him from all his friends, and sufficient liberty to be able to discuss the subject of his imprisonment, and the persecution which had led to it, with the chief Jewish settlers at Rome. Under these circumstances, he was probably better able to effect the object of his mission in the first instance, than if he had come to Rome free, and more obviously by choice. Being immediately under the protection of the government, he was respected by the Jews; whilst the government was seasonably made acquainted, from the nature of the charge against him, with the innocent object of his mission; and therefore was unlikely to be excited against him, as "a pestilent fellow, or a ringleader of sedition." For two years the Gospel was thus suffered to take root in the seat of empire, unmolested and almost unobserved, through a train of providential circumstances, such as the importance of the case seems to have required. A tumult in Rome, like that which had occurred at Ephesus and Philippi, would, humanly speaking, have been fatal to the infant state of the religion, and it seems to have been expressly guarded against by Providence.

Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

And of his intimate connexion with the Soldiery.

The particular mode in which the apostle made his first appearance at Rome, was serviceable to the cause in another point of view. It brought him into an intercourse with the soldiery. His voyage, with all its perils and the miracles to which it gave rise, might have been intended to impress the minds of the soldiers who guarded him (as was actually the result) with the conviction that he was an extraordinary man. Its length might have been protracted with the same view; and the record may have been left in exact minuteness to direct our attention to the circumstance. His integrity had been proved by his mode of life with them generally, and especially by his disinterested care to preserve the whole crew in the ship-

wreck,—his view of futurity, by foretelling that accident,—his support and guidance by a superior power, from the deliverance in which all shared, as well as by the harmless efforts of the viper, and the healing virtue of his prayer. All this would naturally be related, and even magnified, in the social meetings between the soldiers returned from foreign service and their comrades and friends at home. The prætorian guard itself would find in the marvellous prisoner from the east a subject for passing conversation, and his name and acts would be known in Cæsar's palace, and among Cæsar's household. Curiosity would induce some of all these descriptions of persons to visit him; and of these the conversion of a portion could not but take place. Such then was the case. To the Philippians
Philip. iv. 22. he sends, in his Epistle, the brotherly remembrance of the "saints, especially those who were of Cæsar's household;" assures them, that what had befallen him, instead of being a hindrance, had so
Phil. i. 12, 13. far proved a furtherance to his Gospel, that his bonds were made manifest in Christ in the whole Prætorium, and to all others. Before the first persecution of Nero, the little mustard seed had become a tree too firmly rooted to be shaken by the storm; and the Roman historians speak of the converts to Christianity in the Capital, as an immense multitude of different ages and sexes.

The apostle was not unmindful of those Churches, where others were now engaged in following up the ministry which he had commenced, nor was he forgotten by them. His first Epistle from Rome was occasioned by the arrival of Epaphroditus from Philippi,
Phil. ii. 25, and iv. 18. whence he had been sent by the brethren to inquire after him, and to take some supplies for him. Epaphras arrived from Colosse soon after on the same errand.[82] This was the occasion of his
Col. i. 7, 8. Epistles to the Churches of Philippi and Colosse. As Ephesus was so near to the latter city, Tychicus, who was his messenger thither,
Eph. vi. 21. was commissioned with another for the Ephesians. The prevailing tone of all these Epistles is that of warning against the seductive practices of the Judaizing Christians, whose doctrine had now begun to be tinged with the oriental philosophy.

It is pleasing to pursue the apostle, from this his path of public duties, to any of those scenes of private life which bring us more, as it were, into a personal acquaintance with him. Such was the occasion of his Epistle to Philemon, in behalf of his slave Onesimus.

[82] Epaphras's visit must have caused some suspicion, as for some reason he appears certainly to have been detained in confinement with Paul, (Philem. 23.) Unless this expression, as well as that relating to Aristarchus, be taken, not literally, but as implying that they were the companions of Paul the prisoner, and by their society had put themselves in the condition of prisoners.

ST. PAUL AND ONESIMUS.

Epistle to Philemon.

In the zeal with which the advocates of humanity and the natural rights of man, have endeavoured to abolish slavery from the civilized world, it has been not unusual to represent it as inconsistent with Christianity. On the other hand, the absence of all negative precepts respecting it, the frequent allusions and comparisons adopted by our Lord himself from the state of slavery, to illustrate the condition of God's *servants*, and, lastly, the correspondence between Paul and the master of Onesimus, without any reproof from the bold and uncompromising apostle to his convert Philemon, on his assumed right of ownership, even over Onesimus, have been urged as tacit sanctions to the system, whatever abstract objections may lie against it. The subject for its own sake alone would not perhaps have claimed attention; but it furnishes a remarkable illustration of a general system observed in the propagation of Christianity, for the sake of which it is here noticed. The whole controversy proceeds on the mistaken notion, that slavery is a subject to which the precepts of Christianity were directly applicable. But surely, whatever be the magnitude of the evil, and great it doubtless is, it is a *political*, not a *moral* evil; and as such, we may as well expect to find arguments in the New Testament for or against the Christian character of absolute monarchy or republicanism, as against slavery. Immoral and unchristian practices there are, doubtless, which *arise out of* this political or social evil as well as out of tyranny; and these are consistently stigmatized in the New Testament. The ἀνδραποδισταί, the men-stealers, are enumerated by St. Paul himself in a catalogue which embraces the vilest of mankind; but with the question of Slavery the apostle had no more concern officially, than with the universal usurpation of Rome. As in the case of all other institutions, customs, and forms of society *not religious*, Christianity took no cognizance of this; Christ's was not a kingdom of this world, and interfered with nothing in the forms of any society. On the one hand, therefore, it might as well be asserted, that Christianity sanctioned the abominable tyranny of Nero, because Paul made no attempt to seduce from their allegiance his prætorian converts. On the other hand, with the same show of reason, it might be contended, that inasmuch as the welfare and happiness of the several States of Europe are most agreeable to the Christian views, the balance of power should be maintained, not as a matter of political expediency, but as a Christian duty.

1 Tim. i. 10.

ST. PAUL AT LIBERTY.

For the remainder of St. Paul's fourth apostolical journey, we are indebted chiefly to the hints scattered throughout his later Epistles, those, namely, to the Hebrews, to Titus, and to Timothy. From the former it appears, that on his release he continued his

Heb. xiii. 23, 24; Titus i. 5; iii. 12; 1 Tim. i. 3.

ministry from Rome to other parts of Italy; but as to the precise object, or the result of his labours there, we have no certain account; and it is not desirable to mix the traditionary records which exist, with his authentic history. It is a scruple, indeed, which the historian who is passing the line which separates the one from the other, the inspired from the uninspired records, cannot too cautious not to violate. It is well known what errors have from time to time crept into the popular views of Christian believers from an incautious or an artful blending of the two; and the reader and the writer alike should be anxiously watchful in treading the space of meeting, that the character of every fact should be preserved, and Divine authority kept for ever distinct from human. It is partly from the one source, partly from the other, that Spain may be supposed to have formed the next stage of his ministry. From his Epistle to the Romans, it appears to have been his intention to proceed from them to Spain; and as the early Christian writers[83] relate, that such a visit was paid, there can be little doubt that Spain was now included within the compass of his mission. Beyond this general statement, however, it is useless to pursue the thread of truth which one might hope to extricate from the legendary fables with which every Church was wont to magnify its origin, in the same spirit wherein Livy describes great states and cities as referring their foundation uniformly to the gods.[84] From Spain, again, we still more certainly trace his course homeward through Crete, Jerusalem, and thence to Antioch in Syria.

Rom. xv. 24.

Titus i. 5; Heb. xiii. 23, 24.

[83] Chrys. Orat. 7, in St. Paul, Tom. XIII. p. 59, (edit. Saville.) Clement also states, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, that he preached "both in the East and in the West."—Ep. C. 5.

[84] In Præfatione Hist.

CHAPTER VIII.

St. Paul's fifth Apostolical Journey.

A.D. 66, 67.

ROUTE.

Colosse; Philippi; Nicopolis in Epirus; Corinth; Troas; Miletum in Crete; Rome. Phil. i. 25; ii 24; Titus iii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 13, 20; 2 Tim. i. 16, 17.

As the history of St. Paul draws to a close, the authentic materials become more scanty. All that we learn from his own writings is, that from Jerusalem and Antioch he soon resumed his travels, purposing, no doubt, as was his custom, to visit those places in which during the preceding journey he had planted the faith. His route, too, may from the same sources be recognised through the places above noted, without much, however, to instruct us in the progress made at each of them. The Colossians and Philippians he might be induced to visit, if merely to express his sense of their kindness during his late imprisonment.

Unfavourable opinions maintained against Christianity in Italy.

From Troas he sailed to Italy. But the state of public feeling had undergone a lamentable change since his last visit there. Perhaps the Jews had been busy in his absence, spreading, as was their custom, calumnies against Christianity and Paul. Perhaps the Gnostic heresy, which by this time had made considerable progress, might have generated or aided the prejudice. From whatever cause, he found the Christians treated, according to the representations of Suetonius[85] and Tacitus,[86] as an abominable sect, and deserving the hatred of all mankind. It would seem, nevertheless, that he was for a while successful in baffling the accusations of his enemies. But "the time of his departure was at hand; he had fought the good fight, and his course was finished." As the persecution in which he suffered was not confined to him, but for the first time became a public measure, so as to comprehend the whole body of Christians, it deserves a separate consideration. 2 Tim. iv. 6–8.

[85] In Nerone, C. 16. [86] Annal. Lib. XV. C. 44.

NERONIAN OR FIRST PERSECUTION.

A.D. 64.

Cause of the Persecution.

During the reigns of Tiberius and Claudius, Christianity passed unmolested, and almost unnoticed by the Roman government.[87] At Rome itself no tumult, such as occurred in the provinces, had attracted the attention of the government to it. In the provinces, too, the interference of the civil magistrate had been generally exercised to protect the innocent victims of popular prejudice. Whatever may be thought of the tradition, that Tiberius proposed to the Senate the enrolment of Christ amongst the deities of the empire, it is certain that no encouragement was given by the emperor further to indulge the Jews in their malice, in consequence of Pilate's report of the crucifixion, and of the subsequent proceedings of his followers. The procurator ended his days in disgrace and exile; nor is it very improbable, that some rebuke might have been given him for his conduct on that particular occasion; and that owing to this it was that the enemies of our crucified Lord quietly submitted to the mortification of seeing their scheme baffled by the bold assertion of his resurrection, without obtaining from the Roman authority another blow to suppress it. Under Claudius we have seen Paul, even in the character of a criminal, enjoying the favour of Cæsar's household; and Nero himself would hardly have been induced to commence the work of persecution, either from political motives, or from personal dislike. Alarmed at the odium which he had incurred by the burning of Rome, whether truly or falsely attributed to him, he appears only to have cast his eye round for an object on which he might conveniently divert the popular fury. The Christians had become a cause of jealousy to so many, that they naturally presented themselves to his unprincipled mind as precisely the objects he wanted. On them, therefore, the guilt was charged; and in allusion to the nature of their crime,[88] they were burned as public spectacles of amusement: in the exhibition of which, the idle ingenuity which was displayed in aiding the scenic effect, seems more unnatural and inhuman than the most brutal acts of malevolence. Nero escaped: the great mass of people cared not on whom they were avenged for their losses and sufferings; and a large party looked on with silent and malicious satisfaction, at the apparent ruin and suppression of a class of men who had become the objects of the deadliest antipathy. Of these secret enemies, a large portion were Jews.

The peculiar character of the Jews of this age cannot but strike

[87] The Edict of Claudius, no doubt, included Christians as a sect of Jews, but was not directed against them specifically.

[88] They were smeared with pitch, as if to represent torches, and so burnt, in reference to their pretended crime.—Taciti Ann. Lib. XV. C. 44.

the attentive inquirer into the history of the times as singular—as marked by an unnatural readiness to seize every occasion of boldly claiming the blood of their enemies. As a nation, they displayed perpetually an inveterate malice, and a monstrous delight in acts of revenge, such as ordinarily only exists in certain individuals who are exceptions to their sect or nation. All this admits of explanation from their singular fate. Dwelling in all the great cities of the empire, their malevolent feelings were doubly excited, by the presence of their political oppressors, and by the triumph of idolatry. This for a time did not produce any sudden burst of mutiny; which, according to the usual course of things, would have subsided into torpid and slavish insensibility, as each unsuccessful effort rendered them more hopeless, and their oppressors more watchful and more imperious. There was a secret amongst them, which at once fostered their malice and restrained its ebullition; which gave a higher tone to their sense of wrongs, and yet stifled their complaints; it was the daily and hourly hope of a temporal Messiah, and the certain presage of retribution, in obtaining through him dominion over their rulers, and being made the oppressors instead of the oppressed. Like the assassin who had attended on his master for years, and crouched beneath his blows without a murmur, waiting for the moment of revenge; so waited the Jewish people, inmates of every city, and even favourites of the court: to all outward appearance content and peaceable citizens, so much so as to be able to separate their cause from that of the persecuted Christians, but in secret nourishing daily the feelings which at length found vent and caused their ruin. To this may be traced their obstinacy beyond human nature in maintaining the last siege of their city, as well as the monstrous scenes which were exhibited in Cyprus, Alexandria, and elsewhere, and which are, perhaps, the bloodiest on the pages of history, not excepting those of the French Revolution.[89]

Malicious Spirit of the Jews at this period.

Explained.

Among the causes which would produce an increasing party-spirit opposed to the Christians among the Gentiles also, no one, perhaps, was more powerful than that sense of interest, which operated with the large class of tradesmen and artisans. As long as the tenets of their religion were confined to few, its character was as abominable to the pious Gentile indeed as when it spread abroad; but it was then only that it sensibly affected the gains of the silversmith and the sculptor, the seller of victims, or the expounder of oracles. It was then that it operated on the public feeling in each separate place, as the introduction either of a body of superior artists, or a

Hatred of the Gentiles against the Christians.

[89] See note to Gibbon, Vol. II. p. 377, from Dion Cassius, Lib. LXVIII. p. 1145. "In Cyrene they massacred 220,000 Greeks; in Cyprus, 240,000. In Egypt a very great multitude. Many of these unhappy victims were sawed asunder, according to a precedent which David had given the sanction of his example. The victorious Jews devoured the flesh, licked up the blood, and twisted the entrails like a girdle round their bodies." Their misapplication of Scripture example forcibly reminds the Englishman of some domestic scenes, never, let us trust, to be repeated.

sale of better manufactures, would operate in any commercial city; and the condition of the Flemish settlements formerly in England and elsewhere, may, perhaps, not unfitly illustrate the way, in which the harmless, unoffending sect of primitive Christians became the marks of general hatred. With such a feeling, persecution would be raised, not professing the source from which it sprang, but sheltering its selfish origin under various honest pretexts. Demetrius and the craftsmen would act from a sense of interest, but would appeal to a sense of religion; and hence, Christians would not only be branded as "atheists," but all sorts of crimes and foul practices would be attributed to them, in order to furnish motives in which men could sympathize, instead of the interested feelings from which the instigators themselves either altogether or originally acted. No wonder that the heathen historian should be found speaking of them with a disgust which would be felt for Bacchanalian associations; or that it should be whispered at Rome, that all kinds of abomination were practised in those meetings, which having been secret originally from fear, continued to be secret from custom.

Extent of the First Persecution.

It has been questioned by modern authorities, whether this first persecution extended beyond Rome, as was once commonly asserted; and doubtless the strongest historical testimony in support of this assertion does not appear to be authentic. The famous Spanish or Portuguese inscription, which is given by Gruter in his *Inscription. Roman. Corpus*,[90] has been justly suspected by Scaliger and others. Independently of the objections urged against it by those writers, it may be observed, that no native of Spain and Portugal reports it on his own authority. It professes to commemorate Nero's glory, for freeing the province from robbers; and also "for cleansing the province of those who were infecting the human race with a new superstition." This, if authentic, would decide the question; but the denial of its authenticity leaves the fact not *contradicted*, but only *less certain*. It seems, indeed, highly probable that the persecution was general. It was long currently believed to be so; and nothing is more likely, with the existence of prejudices such as have been described, and which only lay smothered and dormant in a large portion of every community, than that the erection of an inquisitorial tribunal at Rome would be imitated, by the nearer provinces at least; under the pretence of a general conspiracy, a harbouring of fugitives, or whatever other pleas there might be, such as always suggest themselves on similar occasions.

The continuance of this persecution through a space of four years renders it still more probable that it was general; and although the legends which have been handed down in the several Churches of Spain and Italy—especially of Lucca, Pisa, Aquileia, and Rome—concerning the martyrdom of their respective saints, are doubtless

[90] Tom. I. p. 238. Mosheim de Rebus Christ. ante Const. Magn. p. 109.

fabulous; yet that circumstance scarcely contradicts the general statement. It appears to have been in the last of these four years when the persecution closed, only because of Nero's death, that the great apostle of the Gentiles suffered. He is said to have been beheaded. About the same time also, St. Peter is asserted to have been crucified, according to the prediction of his blessed Master. There is, however, some difficulty in reconciling this statement with the established chronology.

Martyrdom of St. Paul, A.D. 67. and of St. Peter. John xxi. 18, 19.

CHAPTER IX.

MINISTRY OF ST. PETER, ST. JAMES, AND THE OTHER APOSTLES, AND THEIR COADJUTORS.

THUS far I have attempted to follow the sacred narrative in tracing the course of the Holy Spirit's dispensation through its several successive stages—through the period when the Gospel was preached to the Jews only,—through that during which it was preached to Jews and devout Gentiles,—through that, again, when an especial commission was in force to declare it to the idolaters also. In conformity, likewise, with that which appears to have been the design of the sacred narrative, I have thus far confined my notice to the main line of its progress: only touching on the ministry of the agents of the blessed Comforter, as they were in succession called on to throw open the way wider and wider; and taking no note of the acts and fortunes of the rest. But we are now approaching near to the period when, by the destruction of Jerusalem, the first blow was given to all distinction between converts from Jews and Gentiles, proselytes of the gate and idolatrous heathen; that is, when all distinction of ministry and of teachers was removed, and the unity of the Church completed.

Before we quit, then, the last stage of the mystery of godliness, it will be neither useless nor uninteresting to pause, and inquire into the labours and the fate of those other holy men, from whom we have gradually parted, in pursuing with St. Paul the course of Gentile ministry. Not that much authentic information, beyond what has been given, can be laid before the reader, respecting either him or any other of the apostles and inspired ministers of the Gospel. Not only are the notices of them in the Acts so scanty as to furnish no materials for a narrative; but the greater part have left behind them no epistolary or other monuments; which, as in the case of St. Paul, might have served to confirm or to refute, to complete or to illustrate, the imperfect and uncertain accounts given by uninspired writers. St. John, St. James, St. Peter, and St. Jude, each have left something; but in each case their writings are insignificant, if considered as a source whence to glean biographical notices. Eusebius's account is brief, and yet it contains nearly all besides that can be relied on. So silently did the apostles proceed in their mighty task of building up the Church, and so truly did the
Luke xvii.20. kingdom of God come upon men "without observation."

ST. PETER.

St. Peter, as we have seen, was, by a special revelation, no less than St. Paul, called from the common ministry of all the apostles to preach the Gospel to the devout Gentiles also. After the conversion of Cornelius little can be gleaned from the Scriptures respecting his progress and success. The address of his epistle "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," marks so far the direction of his journeys. The date also shows that Rome had likewise been the scene of his labours.[91] Agreeably to the view already given of his call and special appointment, there will be no difficulty in determining who were "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus," &c. the special objects of his care. That they could not be Jews, as some have hastily asserted, is clear, from the term "strangers." The specific appellation of "elect" also, which appears in the opening of the Epistle, tends further to prove, that those addressed were Gentiles, that is, devout Gentiles—proselytes of the gate—St. Peter's especial charge. That term, it is true, most properly belonged to the Jews, they being originally the *chosen* and *elect* people of God; but it was to show the world that such privilege and distinction was now cancelled, that the apostles more frequently apply it to the Gentiles. In this mode of applying it to the latter, they generally add, by way of explanation, that they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," "predestined," &c. which was as much as to say, We address you as the elect of God—You are God's elect now as really as the Jews were heretofore, and this not from any *change* in God's unchangeable purposes, which the bigoted adversary may suggest to refute your claim, but it was so intended from the beginning of the world. God, of course, must and did foreknow and design what has now come to pass. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the first-born among *many* brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Now the addition of this expression relating to God's foreknowledge, which St. Peter makes to the term elect, determines the Gentiles, or some portion of them, to be the persons intended. But the body of the Epistle explains the words strangers more expressly. *E.G.* "But ye are a *chosen* generation, a *royal priesthood*, an *holy nation*, a *peculiar people*, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath *called you out of darkness* into his marvellous light. Which

General Epistles. A.D. 64, 65.

Acts x. 9.

Why addressed to the Elect.

1 Peter i. 2.

Rom. viii. 29, 30.

1 Pet. ii. 9—11.

[91] That is, if we suppose, as there is much reason for doing, that Rome is designated by the term Babylon. See Tertullian's remarks on the use of this figurative mode of writing in Scripture. Adv. Judæos, C. 9. The Babylon of St. John is one of the instances selected. "Sic et Babylon apud Joannem nostrum, Romanæ urbis figura est." See also Adv. Marcion, Lib. III. C. 13. From 1 and 2 Cor. it seems St. Peter had been at Corinth also.

in time past *were not a people*, but are now *the people of God;* which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain," &c. In this passage, the term "elect," which is obviously characteristic of the Jewish people considered as the original "elect," is transferred to these converts, in order to denote that they were now equally so.

His History doubtful.

In the performance of his ministry, St. Peter is represented by the early writers as the most active and influential of the apostles,[92] which well agrees with the ardent character left of him in the Gospels. But as to the details of that ministry, it would be as unprofitable as it is vain to attempt to separate what is palpably false from what is probable or possible. Much is said concerning his disputes with Simon Magus, his victory over that renowned magician, and the various occasions in which the apostle's activity prevented the growth of those wild theological fancies, which the artful impostor was disseminating, from his native country Samaria even to Rome.[93] Some of this must be authentic, else it would hardly be so unhesitatingly sanctioned by Eusebius. On the other hand, so much ground is there for suspicion in every point, that many have plausibly doubted whether St. Peter ever visited Rome at all.

Probable time of his visit to Rome.

The time of his being there, and the period of his martyrdom, are, of course, by no means easy points to be settled. It would seem on the whole most probable that he accompanied Paul in his last apostolical journey to Rome. For this there would be much reason. The apostle to the idolatrous Gentiles had, ever since his open declaration at Jerusalem, become peculiarly odious to all the judaizing party; so much so, that he could hardly hope for success in his ministry amongst them. It would seem but natural prudence in him to have abstained from addressing the Jews, and, perhaps, even the proselytes of the gate; lest he should again expose himself to the accusation of seducing them from the law of Moses altogether, and thus raise some uproar, which, at Rome especially, would have sorely impeded his work. What more likely than that, under these circumstances, Peter should become his companion; and should undertake the ministry of the circumcision, and of those allied to the Jews by partial proselytism, while Paul confined his labours to the converts from idolatry? It is indeed not very improbable that this was the apostle's second visit to Rome. It is asserted by Eusebius, that he followed Simon Magus thither during the reign of Claudius.[94] Now, considering how St. Paul was at that time circumstanced with respect to the Jewish part of the Church, the presence of another apostle at Rome, for their sake especially, is likely to have been even

[92] Eusebii Hist. Lib. II. C. 14. Τὸν ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα τῶν λοιπῶν ἁπάντων προήγορον. The historian might here mean however that Peter was the first employed in the work of conversion, and then his ἀρετὴ was his faith in confessing Christ, which was so rewarded.

[93] Clementis Recognitiones, Lib. III. C. 63, 69.

[94] Eusebii Hist. Lib. II. C. 13.

then peculiarly requisite. The occasion then may be allowed to support not a little the assertion of the historian. Peter might on this account have come to Rome about the period of Paul's release; and if so, in attributing the foundation of the Church of Rome to St. Peter, the Romanists may not be wholly in the wrong. That Church, like almost all the other primitive Churches, was composed of three distinct classes of converts; those who had been Jews, those who had been devout Gentiles, and those who had been idolaters. The foundation of the Church at Rome among the first two might have been the work of Peter, as its establishment among the last evidently was the work of Paul. With this too agrees the assertion of an old ecclesiastical writer,[95] quoted by Eusebius, that they were joint founders.

Peter's martyrdom took place at Rome during the Neronian persecution; and is said to have been embittered by the execution of his wife before his eyes.[96]

Many works were circulated among the early Christians under St. Peter's name, of which the two Epistles preserved in our Canon alone appear to have been genuine.[97] Of these the former was always admitted as canonical: but the latter appears, from some accidental circumstances, not to have been so early acknowledged by the whole Church. Of the spurious works, his so called Gospel was the most celebrated.[98]

ST. JAMES THE LESS.

James the Less, as he has been styled, to distinguish him from the Son of Zebedee, was a kinsman of our Lord. Notwithstanding this connexion, he was of all the apostles the least odious to the Jews. It was, probably, before his conversion, that he acquired the popular title of the *Just*, but he continued to enjoy it even until his death.

Bishop of Jerusalem.

Concerning his ministry Scripture contains but little. By ecclesiastical writers he is said to have been the first Bishop of Jerusalem; and the narrative of the Acts alone would lead us to suppose that he had some especial jurisdiction in that Church.[99] While the rest of the apostles dispersed themselves abroad, none would be so likely to preserve peace at Jerusalem as he whom the unbelievers themselves honoured as James the Just. Eventually his popularity may have occasioned his martyrdom. Festus, who had succeeded Felix in the government of Judæa, died very soon after Paul's appeal and departure to Rome. The Jews took the opportunity of satiating their disappointed vengeance on the Christians who remained. The

Acts xv. 13.

His Martyrdom. A.D. 62.

[95] Caius.
[96] Eusebii Hist. Lib. II. C. 30.
[97] Ibid. Lib. III. C. 3.
[98] Ibid. Lib. VI. C. 12; see also the extracts from it in Jones's Script. Canon, Part III. C. 31.
[99] In St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians there is an apparent allusion to it. Speaking of "certain who came from the Church at Jerusalem," he describes them as "coming from James"—Gal. ii. 12.

Feast of the Passover came, and numbers, as usual, attended. The occasion seemed a fit one for exposing the whole body of Christians to the fury of the mixed multitude of Jews assembled from all parts. To effect this, it was proposed that James should be prevailed on, either by threats or persuasions, to ascend a conspicuous part of the temple, and there publicly to make a disavowal of Christ as the Messiah. Deserted by their bishop and their most respected apostle, the Christians would have seemed thus most likely to be ruined. James consented. On the appointed day he presented himself upon the upper part of the temple to the crowds below, and in that situation was addressed, by the conspirators, with the fatal question. "Why askest thou me," he replied, "about Jesus the Son of Man, whose abode is on the right hand of the power on high, and who is coming himself hereafter in the clouds of heaven?" The infuriated zealots perceiving that their scheme was likely to end in a contrary impression on the multitude, to that which they had designed, rushed up and cast him headlong. His fall disabled him, and he was immediately assailed with stones. Strength enough was yet left him to imitate his dying Lord, and to pray aloud for the forgiveness of his murderers. A priest who was looking on, was so affected at hearing him, that he made an attempt to save him: but before he could effect his purpose, the apostle received a blow from a club, which ended his sufferings.

Of all the atrocities which the Jews from time to time committed, or caused to be committed, against the Christians, this alone seems to have been regarded by them with remorse and horror. Their historian, who was apparently no friend to Christianity, remarks, that the siege and destruction of Jerusalem was long afterwards currently spoken of as a visitation of God for this crime more especially.

His Epistle. A.D. 61.

One Epistle is all which has been preserved of James's scriptural labours. For no other reason, as far as can be ascertained, than because it had not been so frequently alluded to as the generality of Scripture, by the writers immediately succeeding the apostolic age, it, at one period, laboured under some suspicion. Its authenticity is nevertheless unquestionable. It is addressed to *the Jews in the dispersion*, an expression which, by its obvious contrast to that of *strangers in the dispersion*, confirms the interpretation assigned to this latter phrase in the catholic Epistle of St. Peter.

ST. JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JOHN.

A.D. 42. Acts xii. 1,2.

The martyrdom of St. James is noticed in the narrative of the Acts. It is there simply stated, that Herod put forth his hands to afflict the Church, and slew James, the brother of John, with the sword. Uninspired history furnishes little in addition to this account. All that Eusebius has thought worthy of retaining is, that his accuser became his convert and fellow-sufferer; in the

course of his trial was convinced of his victim's innocence, and the truth of his doctrine; and, by openly expressing that conviction, was included in the sentence of death passed on him.

ST. ANDREW.

Andrew is said to have selected Scythia for the scene of his labours, but with what success we have no authentic testimony either of ancient history or of modern researches.

ST. THOMAS.

Parthia is named as the district allotted to Thomas. Tradition has further ascribed to him the foundation of the Church among those interesting people, known by the name of the "Christians of St. Thomas." Some have, however, disputed the truth of this account, and suppose the Thomas from whom they derive this name to have been a bishop, who lived some centuries subsequent to the apostolical era.

ST. JUDE, ALSO CALLED LEBBÆUS, AND THADDÆUS.[100]

Among the incidents recorded of St. Thomas is one, that he was inspired to send Thaddæus the apostle to Edessa for the cure and baptism of Abgarus. The circumstance of his being sent by Thomas alone, seems strong against the identity of the Thaddæus who preached at Edessa, and the apostle who was also called Jude. This tradition, however, whether true or false, is nearly all (besides his Epistle) which we know of his history. The authenticity of the Epistle itself, too, was subject for a time to suspicion; which gradually cleared up, as a freer intercourse between the several members of the Christian body caused those Scriptures which had a confined circulation to be better known, and their original history to be more certainly ascertained.

His Epistle. A.D. 70.

The mission to Edessa is connected with an event, the improbability of which has been generally contended for, notwithstanding the grave testimony by which the main incidents, at least, of the story are supported. It is said, that while our Lord was yet alive, the fame of his miracles spreading beyond Judæa was reported to Abgarus, king of Edessa. This prince, who was labouring under some grievous malady, sent accordingly to Jesus, to desire that he would come and heal him. His letter, and one pretended to be returned by our Lord, excusing his personal attendance, and promising to send one of his disciples to him, were long preserved in the archives of Edessa. In fulfilment of this promise, it is added, that after Christ's death Thaddæus went thither, and that his testimony was commonly appealed to for the existence of these records. Some add, that our Saviour sent also his portrait.

Letter of Abgarus.

[100] It seems probable that the two latter names were applied to him during our Lord's lifetime, in order to distinguish him from Judas the traitor.

It is evidently somewhat suspicious, that no notice should have been preserved of so remarkable an incident in any of the Gospel narratives. And yet this is hardly a conclusive argument, inasmuch as many things we know were omitted;[101] and this, however gratifying to our curiosity, cannot be considered as peculiarly important for our instruction in Christian truth, the great principle, we may presume, which guided the Evangelists in their selections. Some foundation there might be for the story, however fabulous the detail. Eusebius relates it without scruple, omitting what is the most improbable circumstance, the sending of the portrait. What more likely, after all, than that the fame of Jesus, and his healing miracles, should reach the sick prince of Edessa, and that he should send, according to the custom of the East, to bid the prophet come and heal him?[102] Equally probable is it, that the substance of the correspondence should be registered in the archives of Edessa, and afterwards shown to an apostle of the same Jesus; although that correspondence may not have passed between them in the form of Epistles, but of messages. There is nothing certainly in the character of our Lord's reply which appears derogatory from, or inconsistent with the tone and substance of his discourses.[103]

At the same time, it would be somewhat at variance with the strict rule of his ministry, to suppose that the correspondence was carried on with a view either of healing or converting one who was a Gentile.[104]

ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

That Nathanael is the person better known as an apostle by the name of Bartholomew, may be fairly inferred from the Scripture narrative. Otherwise we can hardly understand why Bartholomew should not be numbered among the apostles by St. John, nor Nathanael by the other Evangelists; or again, why, in relating the same event, St. John should speak of Philip and Nathanael coming together to Christ, the others, of Philip and Bartholomew. It seems strange, too, that Nathanael should not have been a qualified candidate for the apostleship made vacant by Judas's death, unless he were already an apostle.

Nathanael, then, might have been called *Bar*tholomew, or the son of Tholmai, as Peter was *Bar*jona, and Joses, *Bar*nabas. The indiscriminate use of these names, and the gradual adoption of one

[101] An event so important as the raising of Lazarus was omitted by the three earliest Evangelists. No doubt a reason may be suggested in the danger to which the living object of the Saviour's friendship and power might have been exposed, by calling attention to him. But other reasons, less obvious, may have occasioned the total suppression of many parts of our Lord's life. Our knowledge of his history, like our knowledge of all religious subjects, may be not the less sufficient because it is "in part."

[102] See the account of the king of Syria's embassy to Jerusalem, to procure assistance of Elisha for Naaman the leper.—2 Kings v.

[103] See Appendix [G.]

[104] See Horsley's Sermon on Matthew vii. 26.

to the exclusion of the other, is only what certainly occurred in the case of Barnabas.[105]

India is said to have been the scene of his labours, and amongst his converts there a Hebrew copy of St. Matthew's Gospel is reported to have been found, at the close of the second century, by Pantænus.[106]

ST. PHILIP.

Hierapolis was the chief abode of Philip. He is said to have been married, and the father of a large family, one of whom is mentioned as peculiarly devoted to the service of the Church, and the rest as prophetesses. If we may believe the uninspired record further, he was endued with no small portion of the power from on high, and on one occasion raised the dead. It is usual with us now to regard this, and all uninspired accounts of miracles, as more than doubtful. Yet certain it is, that the apostles were all gifted with power to work miracles; and must have needed them most to awaken the attention, and to convince the minds of those who were the least prepared for conviction from reason and Scripture. It may be wrong to contend for the certainty of any one miracle contained in the traditionary records of primitive times, but it is equally wrong to maintain a system of decided dissent from all.

ST. SIMON ZELOTES.

The title given to Simon, to distinguish him perhaps from Simon Peter, implies that he belonged originally to a sect of the Pharisees, whose intemperate and fanatical zeal was not the least of the many evils under which the Jews of this age laboured.[107] Egypt, Cyrene, and the African coast, are said to have heard the Gospel from him. Great Britain, too, has by some been included within the compass of his ministry, and is reported to have been the scene of his martyrdom.

ST. BARNABAS.

With the account of Barnabas's separation from Paul ends all authentic information concerning him. Cyprus was most probably the scene of his after ministry; or, if it extended beyond his native island, Egypt, rather than Gaul or Italy, should be the place assigned to him. All certain traces of him, however, are entirely lost; and it would be unnecessary to make any further mention of him, were it not for the writings which have been ascribed to him. Acts xv. 39.

Of these, the catholic Epistle, generally published with the works of the apostolic fathers, is all that still pretends to his name. Few can read it without being so sensible of its unscriptural character, as to seek no further for the external evidence against it. It is His pretended Epistle.

[105] So also the names Matthew and Levi were applied indifferently to the Evangelist.
[106] Eusebii Hist. Lib. V. C. 10. [107] Joseph. de Bello Jud. Lib. IV.

therefore, by universal consent, now pronounced to be a forgery. And yet there is, after all, some difficulty in understanding how it should have obtained so much credit with the early Church, if it were so decidedly spurious as we suppose it to be. It is quoted as Barnabas's by Clemens Alexandrinus; Origen seems to recognise its scriptural authority; and Eusebius assigns it a place in the Canon. On the other hand, in Jerome's catalogue it is classed with the apocryphal books; and his authority is supported by the prevailing voice of antiquity.

Some ground there must be for this difference, or apparent difference, of statement. This very Epistle might have had, perhaps, for its basis a genuine work of Barnabas; and might be the gradual corruption of impostors, who availed themselves of the acknowledged fact, that a writing containing such and such general features was the production of this apostle. Hence, although its true estimate was soon obtained, its character would be for a while variously represented. What tends to confirm this, is the motley appearance it presents; the marked difference of style and thought between the beginning and the close, and the clumsy interpolations which scarcely affect disguise.

The only reason which can be discovered, for the conjecture of some in the early Church, that he was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, seems to have been the concealment of the true author's name for a time, and the natural spirit of surmise to which it gave rise. St. Barnabas was named as likely to have written it, and so also were St. Luke and Clement.[108]

ST. MATTHIAS.

Of the calling or election of St. Matthias, mention has been already made, and beyond this nothing certain is known. Eusebius has preserved a remark on the doctrine which he preached, *viz.* that it was the same in substance with what was afterwards called the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.[109]

A Christian is properly enough unwilling to admit such a charge on this solitary testimony. At the same time, it must not be pronounced impossible that Matthias should become a heretic, any more than that Judas should become a traitor. On a subject of belief, we have seen Peter opposed to Paul; and Paul, again, on a question of ministerial duty, opposed to Barnabas. The very gifts and endowments of the Spirit were, no doubt, liable to abuse and perversion; and apostles, as well as all Christians, were free agents, and responsible for their use of their extraordinary talents. "Wo unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!"

Perhaps, after all, St. Matthias's words were misinterpreted; as St. Paul's and St. James's have been since.

[108] See Appendix [H.]

[109] Hist. Lib. III. C. 29.

ST. MATTHEW.

That St. Matthew was the author of the Gospel which bears his name is nearly all recorded of him, beyond the scanty notices of Scripture. It was the first that was written,[110] although it is impossible to fix the precise date.

Whether originally composed in Hebrew, as some have asserted, or in its present Greek, is a question not material to us. The Greek, if the translation, so soon superseded the use of the Hebrew, as to be the one commonly read and quoted; and, as such, received the sanction of inspired authority.

ST. MARK.

St. Mark's Gospel is said to have been derived from St. Peter's instructions, or at least to have received his revisal and sanction. It was compiled at the request of the Christians at Rome;[111] who, very naturally, employed for this work one who had been the follower both of Paul and Peter, if, as has been suggested, the original Church in that city was made up of their respective congregations. It has been remarked accordingly by many, as a striking characteristic of this Gospel, that it studiously avoids all allusions and expressions which would not be equally intelligible to Jew and Gentile, and seems carefully adapted throughout to all the classes of believers. It contains also many Latin words for which the Greek equivalents were in common use, and adopted by the other evangelists.[112]

It was scarcely possible for a portion of Scripture so circumstanced as this must have been, not to have been always recognised as authentic.

Although Mark was not an apostle, yet the gifts of the Spirit were so widely diffused, that supposing him to have recorded from memory the instructions of an apostle, the *prohibitory impressions* of the Holy Spirit, (the character of which has been already pointed out, and which there is no ground for appropriating to the apostolic order,) would have been sufficient to secure him from error. It is indeed asserted, that his and St. Luke's history were finally revised, at least, the one by St. Peter, the other by St. Paul. But, after all, our belief in its inspired character rests on the judgment of the primitive Church; which was most competent to decide whether a Gospel written by such an author, and under such circumstances, was or was not of Divine authority.

If St. Mark's Gospel received the revision of St. Peter, it could not have been written later than A.D. 66 or 67, the period of his imprisonment and martyrdom at Rome. Circiter. A.D. 65.

[110] Origenis Fragm. Tom. I. Commentar. in Matthæum.
[111] Euseb. Hist. Lib. II. C. 15.
[112] Κεντουρίων for ἑκατόνταρχος, &c.

ST. LUKE.

His Gospel, A.D. 63.

St. Luke's Gospel, like that of St. Mark, could not have been published on his own authority, because neither was he an apostle. Nevertheless, in his narrative of the Acts he was particularly qualified for the office of historian; because he was an eye-witness, and bore part in most of the scenes which he describes. For the remainder too, and for the Gospel history, there could be no surer guide than St. Paul, with whose preaching he was so long familiar.[113]

Acts i. 1; xvi. 10—18; xx. 5, 6; xxi. 1—18.

Inspiration of St. Luke.

As was observed of St. Mark's Gospel, a portion of Scripture so written has not less claim to *inspiration* than the work of an apostle or prophet delivering an immediate revelation from God. For the true notion of *inspiration*, even in the latter case, is not that the sacred penman *was inspired while in the act of writing;* but that he wrote *what he had beforehand received by extraordinary revelation.* It would be impossible else to account for the variety of style and thought, the occasional introduction of matter foreign to revelation, and whatever else belongs to such writings in common with all mere human compositions. The contrast between the true Scripture and the pretended records of revelation, in this respect, has been already noticed. Between Luke's writing what he had heard from Paul, and Paul's writing what he had received from God, the only difference could be, the difference between them as authors; the difference of style, of manner, and of the other accidents, as it were, of authorship. If in writing, or in preaching, St. Paul's memory had *misled* him, some check from the Holy Spirit would have guided him back to the truth. Now Luke, like all who preached the Gospel, must in his preaching have enjoyed the same preservative aid, and why not in writing also? Had any necessary portion of Christian instruction *escaped* St. Paul's memory, the Holy Spirit then would have called it to his remembrance; for such was our Lord's promise to the apostles. But if this promise did not extend to others, if Luke's *omissions* were not miraculously supplied, Paul was at hand to supply them. Granting the possible omission, too, of any necessary point, this would not, like a false statement, be inconsistent with the inspired character of any one Scripture, inasmuch as the record of the Gospel is not one but many.[114]

Acts of the Apostles, A.D. 64.

St. Luke's Gospel appears to have always passed for his; and although the Acts have not likewise his name attached, yet the internal evidence, and the voice of the early Church, certainly declare him to be the author.[115]

Epistle to the Hebrews at one time ascribed to St. Luke.

That the Epistle to the Hebrews should have been ascribed to one whose writings had been the vehicle of so much of St. Paul's instruction, is nothing wonderful. At the time when the author's name was studiously kept a secret from the public, the tone of

[113] Hieronymi Proœm. in Matt. [114] See Appendix [I.]
[115] See Appendix [K.]

Luke's conversation, and his very expressions, perhaps in some instances being derived from St. Paul, might naturally have fixed on him the uncertain authorship. And if St. Paul desired concealment, St. Luke would be the less likely to be forward in disclaiming the Epistle; lest he should, by so doing, direct surmise towards the right person.

It has been very reasonably conjectured, that his Gospel was somewhat prior to that of Mark.

ST. JOHN.

St. John concludes the Inspired era.

St. John was the last of the apostles; with him therefore, and with the period through which his life and miracles extended, we may consider the second great era of Christianity to close—the era when it was preached by inspired ministers. For although no one can undertake to prove that miracles were not performed long subsequently, yet the main system of Christianity was conducted thenceforth by ordinary means and ordinary agents. After St. John, there was no one endowed with that most distinguishing power of an apostle, the power of *communicating* the gifts of the Spirit.

A life which was prolonged, no doubt providentially, to the close almost of the first century, and which consequently embraces more than sixty years of the most interesting period of our religion, may be expected to furnish an eventful record. But such is not the case. To the acts of St. John belongs the same character as to those of the rest of the apostles; they are only known by their results.

Probable reason for theobscurity which attaches to the History of the Apostles.

Whether in this veil of oblivion, which has been allowed to conceal their glorious exertions from our view, there be any thing like a design of Providence perceptible, the pious Christian may be allowed to consider. Perhaps he may find in it a merciful removal of a temptation to view the work in which they were engaged as the result of human virtue, more than of Divine power extraordinarily exercised. Contemplating the propagation of religion at this distance, with the earthly and mortal instruments employed by the Spirit removed from the scene, we are led more directly to trace it to its source, and to see it in the light in which St. Paul warns his own converts and us to view it; as the work not of himself or of his fellow-labours, but of God who was working in them.

Supported by the effects produced by Church Legends.

It may not a little confirm this estimate of the matter, and teach us to distrust our untried hearts on this score, to recollect that the want of an authentic account of all the labours and sufferings of the apostles. and early ministers of the Gospel, has been supplied by a series of legendary tales, which, even without proof or likelihood to recommend them, have actually produced the evil supposed. If the trust of so large a portion of Christians for so many ages has been withdrawn from God to his ministers, from the Lord Jesus to his saints; and the prop of that trust has been the boasted legends

of miracles wrought, and other Divine manifestations; how much greater would have been the hold on men's minds made by such a superstition, had these legends been superseded by accounts not less marvellous, but more authentic!

The history of St. John, like that of the others, abounds with these legends. At one time, we are told, that he escaped unharmed from a cauldron of boiling oil; at another, he is described as the hero of a romantic adventure among a band of robbers, whose chieftain he reclaimed and led away triumphantly. As was before observed, it would indeed be presumptuous to say of all these occurrences, or of any in particular, that they must be false, either because they are marvellous, or because they are not equally attested with the miracles of the Scriptures. Much of the marvellous must doubtless have occurred in the unsubstantiated ministry of the apostles; and the lesson to be learned from the removal of inspired testimony to those Divine interpositions, is not certainly that of universal and dogmatic disbelief. These events *may be* true. Our duty only is, not to mix them indiscriminately with those which bear the seal of the Spirit affixed; for whatever reason that mark of distinction may have been given. Let the reader of the lives of the apostles and their inspired contemporaries read such facts as the escape of St. John from the cauldron, not as in themselves improbable; but to be received or rejected as any other portion of history would be, according to the character of the historian, and the source of his information. At the same time, whatever degree of probability attaches to them, let him read their record with the full impression, that these the Holy Spirit has passed by without setting his seal thereon. Our Divine Guide meant not to make the same use of them, as of Scripture miracles. Whatever the facts were to those of old time, to us they are no objects of faith: none of the appointed evidences of our religion; subjects for curious and learned inquiry, perhaps, but not for holy meditation—they are not in the Bible, and must not be added thereto.

St. John's two Epistles, A.D. 69. and Revelations, A.D. 95.

St. John's life, divested of these, affords his biographer but a scanty supply of materials. He has left with the Church two Epistles, and a book of Revelations, relating, as it would seem, to the history of the Church, traced through its successive stages. From these and from ecclesiastical history it appears, that the latter portion, at least, of his ministry, was employed in Asia Minor, especially in the famous seven cities. As both St. Peter's and St. Paul's course embraced this district, it was after their martyrdom, probably, that he undertook the superintendence of these celebrated Churches. With the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the Jewish polity, all distinction between the various classes of Christian converts ceased. There was henceforth no longer any peculiar law, or any peculiar apostle, for converts from Jews, or

proselytes, or idolaters. St. John would thenceforth as properly attach himself to the flock of St. Paul, as to that of St. Peter. Of his former ministry there is no trace, beyond the slight notices contained in the early part of the Acts. From this time, however, he appears to have been fixed in Asia Minor, and to have made Ephesus especially his place of residence. Over the seven Churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, bishops appear to have exercised authority; subject to that extraordinary and peculiar control, assumed by the apostles for the better foundation of the Church, but obviously designed to cease with the removal of the apostolic order. Hence the charge from the Lord Jesus, through his aged servant, to these bishops, is not as to men under authority, but as to those with whom the supreme government and chief responsibility was left,—a charge given when the last temporary prop of the holy edifice was about to be removed, and the building was now considered complete and stable.

The book of Revelations, which contains this charge, was written in the island of Patmos, whither John had been banished from Asia Minor in the persecution of Domitian. It was during his abode there, probably, that he also wrote his Epistles; if indeed the first be not more properly a treatise or pastoral discourse. On Domitian's death he was restored to his residence at Ephesus, and died there at the advanced age of ninety-six. Few historical pictures are more pleasing than that of the old man in his latter days joining the Christian assemblies, in despite of age and feebleness, and always leaving behind him the same brief and simple precept, "Little children, love one another."

His Gospel, A.D. 97.

It was during the latter part of his life, either whilst he was in Patmos, or after his recall from banishment, that he composed his Gospel. He had at that time seen and approved the narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke;[116] and his testimony to these at that advanced period of the Church's growth, is doubtless one cause of thankfulness from all ages, to Him who permitted him to tarry thus long. His reasons for adding yet another Gospel are said to have been, first, to supply the omissions of the former Evangelists on some points of our Lord's history; next, to counteract the heretical opinions that were now springing up concerning Christ's nature. What those opinions were, and whence their origin, will be considered in the sequel.

John xxi. 22.

As to the Gospel itself, it has been universally received by the Church in all ages; although the stubborn testimony it contains to the divine character of Jesus, has naturally made it an object of cavil and of misrepresentation to many. Of the authenticity of the Revelations and of the Second and Third Epistles, some doubts

[116] Eusebii Hist. Lib. III. C. 24.

were once entertained; which, as in the case of other Scriptures in our Canon, labouring under the same imputation, were removed, when the communication between the different parts of the Christian world became such as to enable these doubts to be sifted and duly estimated.[117]

PHILIP THE DEACON, TIMOTHY, TITUS, AND OTHER COADJUTORS OF THE APOSTLES.

Besides the two Evangelists, Mark and Luke, there are others whose names are recorded, as having received gifts through the apostles, or as being otherwise divinely appointed to be their fellow-labourers. Of these, few can be traced beyond the scenes in which they are briefly introduced in the sacred writings. Philip the deacon's history has been much confounded with that of the apostle of the same name; and contains nothing which merits the labour of unravelling the entangled materials. Timothy and Titus deserve more notice; but only on account of the appointment with which we find them invested by St. Paul, and in which they continued to be recognised by all the early authorities of the Church. Timothy was made by the apostle bishop of Ephesus, and Titus, bishop of Crete.

Philip the Deacon.

Timothy and Titus.

Timothy.

The first were Bishops.

In St. Paul's Epistles to them, some light is accidentally thrown on two important and interesting questions relating to their office, now the highest in the Church: the first, By what authority were these bishops (the first of their order as far as we can learn) created? the second, What was the form observed?

Both these questions may be resolved by that single verse of the Epistle to Timothy, in which Paul exhorts him, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

1 Tim. iv. 14.

Divinely appointed.

From these words the appointment may certainly be inferred to have taken place in consequence of some *extraordinary Divine* command. It was "by prophecy;" or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "according to the prophecies which went before on thee." As the Holy Ghost bade the Church of Antioch separate Paul and Barnabas for their apostolic appointment, so, it is implied, that Timothy was separated by Divine command for the episcopal appointment.

1 Tim. i. 18.

That even in the appointment of presbyters such an express revelation of the Divine choice may have taken place, is not improbable, from St. Paul's remark on the Ephesian presbyters, that "the Holy Ghost had made them overseers." In the case of the bishops, at all events, it can scarcely admit of a doubt. The sacred testimony requires no support; but it gives us some additional assurance that we are not mistaking its meaning, when we find the

Acts xx. 28.

[117] Of those who in modern times have questioned the authenticity and inspiration of the book of Revelations, Less and Michælis are the most distinguished. Dean Woodhouse's Review of the Evidence, in reply to the objections of the latter, should be carefully examined by all who wish to have a satisfactory view of the question. See Woodhouse's Annotations on the Apocalypse.

earliest Christian documents of the uninspired Church speaking in the same strain. Clement of Rome, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, states it as the custom of the apostles "to make trial by the Spirit," that is, by the "power of discerning," in order to determine who were to be overseers and deacons in the several Churches they planted. Clement of Alexandria speaks particularly of the Churches in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, the overseers of which he understood to have been marked out for ordination, by a revelation of the Holy Ghost to St. John.

At the same time, although the episcopal ordination rested on authority similar to that on which the apostles themselves were invested with their office, yet there is ample evidence that this new class of ministers was distinct from the apostolical. Throughout the Epistles to Timothy and Titus all their information and instruction are said to be derived from the apostles. They had themselves, and by virtue of their office, no revelations.

Their heavenly *gift* (χάρισμα) was doubtless of the same character and import as that communicated to all believers at baptism,—communicated in like manner, and for the same purpose. It was to *testify* to the ordained, and to all others, that the appointment was Divine—that the bishop was duly ordained—was an official minister of the Holy Ghost; and that his official acts would therefore be valid and effectual.

By laying on of hands.

The next question relates to the form. The only ceremony recorded is that which was used in many solemn acts, *viz.* the laying on of hands. It was the form whereby the apostles gave the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; and as these extraordinary gifts were not only ministerial instruments, as, *e.g.* the gift of interpretation, but also signs of some invisible agency or sanction, these forms are still observed, although the sign of confirmation is no longer granted by the Divine Dispenser.

But then, the ceremony of laying on of hands is here said to have been performed by the presbyters, while in the Second Epistle to Timothy Paul asserts it to have been performed by himself. From which the conclusion is clear, that although the "gift" which testified the appointment might have depended on the efficacy of the apostles joining in the ceremony, yet that the ceremony had a further intent; else why should the whole presbytery join? It was then the act of the Church, with whom was vested the ordination of bishops; in like manner as the Church was before made formally to ordain the two extraordinary apostles to the Gentiles. By the Church, as was before explained, is meant the representatives of the Church; whether, as in the case of the ordination of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, these were presbyters alone, or, as in that of Timothy, there was one superior to the presbyters also. Accordingly, in tracing back the annals of episcopacy, we find the custom scrupulously observed, and the bishop and the presbyters uniting in

the laying on of hands. Occasional mention is made of the ceremony being performed by the bishop alone, probably considered as the president of the presbyterian body; but never of the presbytery without their head.

It is quite clear, then, that the ordination of ministers rests with the Church as one of its rights; we should rather say, one of its *duties;* for these are not matters of endowment, but of obedience. But then, with whom was the appointment left? The Holy Ghost was here, as it would seem, in all instances the sole guide. For, although Timothy was left with power to ordain, yet he had a special gift attending his appointment; and what more appropriate than the gift of discerning spirits, which in its application would be nearly equivalent to a Divine revelation of the Holy Ghost's choice? This, then, was probably the last kind of extraordinary assistance which was withdrawn from the Church; and, when withdrawn, the mode in which the other aids had been gradually and successively supplied by human means, became an obvious rule in this case also. For revelation, they had a record; human eloquence and learning continued what inspired wisdom and knowledge and utterance had commenced; the attested account of signs and wonders was operating in like manner as had the miracles themselves. Each extraordinary support had served not only as a substitute, but also as temporary shelter and protection for some natural power, which was allowed to grow up under its shade, and to attain proper maturity, before the occasional fence was removed. To the Church the Holy Ghost was wont to specify his appointments; and when that voice was no longer given, the Church felt sure that it was called on to act, just as individuals in office had been, who no longer found themselves prompted by the gift of wisdom, or knowledge, or eloquence. It employed all its natural powers in choosing those on whom it thought the inspired choice would have fallen. Its *office*—its *duty*—remained, although all miraculous aid was withdrawn; just as the duty of those individuals who filled any office in the Church, continued, although no extraordinary help was perpetuated together with the office. The other substitutes of inspiration had proved effectual, and the exercise of natural judgment could not but be expected to prove so in this case also. When the preacher or the interpreter used his natural learning or eloquence, his success assured him that God had sanctioned this new mode of ministry; and, by analogy, the Church, when left to itself, knew that its appointments, if made according to the best human judgment, would be sanctioned and approved by Heaven.

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

SCHISM and Heresy, considered merely as ecclesiastical crimes, may be illustrated by the analogous case of political crimes. The schismatic renounces his allegiance to the ecclesiastical government under which he has been living; the heretic adopts practices and opinions contrary to its laws. The schismatic therefore is, as it were, in rebellion against his Church; the heretic, a violater of its laws.[118]

Here, however, the analogy ceases. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Accordingly, while the rightful punishment of the rebel who is found arrayed against his country and its government is inflicted by the society injured; the schismatic, who is similarly opposed to his Church, is reserved for a sentence hereafter,—a sentence either of acquittal or condemnation, as the motives which gave rise to the rebellious act shall be found sufficient or otherwise.

Nature of this Unity.

The infallibility of the Church's rulers in the apostolic age might be supposed sufficient to have preserved unanimity throughout the Christian World. But this was by no means the case. Previous, however, to the notice of those who have been charged with schism or heresy, it may be requisite to make some remarks on the subject of Christian Unity. Few points have been less satisfactorily discussed than the exact import of this word, nor would it be easy to remove all the difficulty with which the question is encumbered. The following observations however may, it is hoped, tend to clearer views on the subject.

Unity of Dispensation.

When Christian Unity is spoken of in the New Testament, it generally means the unity of dispensation for the various classes of converts. It is expressive of the great principle, that all were to be "one fold under one Shepherd;" that, contrary to the Jewish prejudice, Christianity was to be one and the same, as to all its benefits and privileges, for Jews, devout Gentiles, and idolaters, who embraced it. Hence it is called "the unity of *the Spirit*," in opposition to the character of the Jewish dispensation, which was

Eph. iv. 3.

[118] I do not know whether this distinction in the use of the terms schism and heresy obtains generally; and heresy undoubtedly, in its original acceptation, meant a schism or sect. So the term is used in Acts xxiv. 5, 14. But as the two meanings require to be clearly kept apart, it is at least convenient to appropriate one to each term.

partially allotted, and shaded off, as it were, from native Jew to the proselyte of righteousness, and. in a lower degree still, to the proselyte of the gate. Hence, also, it is said to be preserved "in the bond of peace;" because the main ground of irritation and enmity on religious matters was the jealousy of the Jews respecting the oneness (ἑνότης) of God's Church. That such is the unity so often recommended, may be proved especially from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians; in which he enforces it as a duty of Christians, *on the ground* that they partake of "one faith, one baptism," &c. which he could not have done, if difference of faith in general or of forms were the departure from the unity intended.

Eph. iv. 3.

Eph. iv. 5.

Against this unity, then, neither schism nor heresy is necessarily an offence. Nothing, undoubtedly, was so likely to prevent schism as an equality of dispensation, which should leave all classes of converts, in every age or country, without room for jealousy and discontent; but neither schism nor heresy is properly an offence against the Church universal, but against some particular church, and by its own members. It is true, that he who is an heretic or schismatic of one church, may be an unfit member for many others, or for all others; and so it is with certain grievous offenders against the laws of any one political society: and we often say of such an one that he is unfit for society. But because a murderer is tolerated neither by the French nor by the English, we do not thence infer that the French and English form one political body.

No Church can be Heretical or Schismatical.

On the same principle, it must be admitted, that no *church* can be properly called either heretic or schismatic. For churches, being independent establishments, may indeed consult each other; but, having no one common arbitrator, if they cannot agree, the guilt of that church which is in error is neither schism nor heresy properly, but corrupt faith,—not an ecclesiastical offence, but one between God and the corrupt church. Accordingly, our Reformers, whilst they characterise the Romish Church as one that has *erred*, have very properly avoided the misapplication of the terms "schismatic, and heretic" to it.

The Seceders forming such a Church may be both. Though not so their successors.

Nevertheless, if a church has been formed by the secession of members from another church, on disagreement of principles, each seceder is both a schismatic and a heretic, because of his former connexion; but the crime does not attach to the Church so formed; and accordingly is not entailed on succeeding members who naturally spring up in it. If the schism was founded in *error*, the guilt of error would always attach to it and its members; but not that of schism or heresy. On the same principle, the present king of Great Britain's claim to the allegiance of his subjects is not affected by the question of William the Conqueror's right to the throne formerly; nor would an American traitor stand excused, who should plead in defence of his treason, that the disunion was unjustifiable, to which the United States owe their independence.

Distinct churches may form alliances, such as existed between the famous seven Churches of Asia. But then, a secession from this alliance would of itself be no crime whatever. Thus, supposing the Church of Rome not to have needed any reform, still the Church of England would have been justified in renouncing its association with it, simply on the ground of expediency.

What is a Church?

But, then, what constitutes a Church? Is the boundary line political or geographical, or what? It is obvious that a mere agreement of faith and practice does not render two bodies of Christians one Church; for the Church of England and the American Episcopalian Church agree, but still are two distinct churches. Much less can it be supposed to depend on a political or geographical boundary; except, indeed, when the church is united with the state, and then the limits of both are by agreement the same. Even the connexion between the Church founded, and that from which it has been planted, does not amount to this; for when Jerusalem sent forth its spiritual colonies, they consulted indeed with the mother Church, and with one another, but each was, from the very first, independent, and a church in itself.

Shall we say, then, that the principle is purely conventional? Every body of men, and every individual, falls, by birth and other circumstances, into some one Christian body; just as he does into some one political or other social body. The Church of England, for instance, if even it were deprived of the advantages which it enjoys in the protection of the state, would be naturally perpetuated as it now is, and every secession from it would be as truly a schism, and every profession opposed to its Articles as truly a heresy.

Cautions necessary before Secession.

This, however, does not imply that no plea can justify the members of any church from seceding. He who is convinced that his church is essentially in error, is bound to secede. But, like the circumstances which may be supposed to justify the subject of any realm in renouncing his country and withdrawing his allegiance, the plea should be long, and seriously, and conscientiously weighed. Indeed, a cautious and painful self-examination is even more awfully important; because the temptation to the act receives no check, corresponding to that human punishment which menaces the political rebel. Separation or secession may, however, take place, by mutual agreement, and without any difference of faith or practice between the parties. In this case, there would be no question about corruption and error in the one, and heresy and schism in the other; neither would they be joint offenders against Christian unity. As colonies may grow into a greatness, which would make it inconvenient for them to remain dependencies of the parent state, and may separate amicably from it, and to the acknowledged benefit of both; so it may be with respect to a church and its branches, or other causes may render the separation desirable and justifiable. There was no schism, *e.g.* when the Episcopal Church of the United

The separation from the Church of Rome not a Schism.

States separated from our own. The separation of our Church from that of Rome would, on the same principle of convenience, have been justifiable and right, even had there been no cause for separation in the corruptions and usurpations of the latter. We were, at once, too numerous, and too much disconnected by distance, and other circumstances, from those with whom we were nominally in communion, to form with them one Society—such as a church seems designed to be—under one government. It may be difficult to define the proper extent of a church, and more, no doubt, must depend on national and other differences than on mere numbers; but it is incompatible with the nature and ends of the institution, that a church should spread into an empire, such as the Romish once was, and such as it still asserts on principle. In such a state of things one great safeguard against corruption is removed—the protest of many independent churches against the offending one—their immediate protest and their permanent testimony against it. Corruption grows unreproved and unregistered. That evidence, too, for purity of doctrine and practice, which arises from the concurrence of many independent but consenting churches is, in like manner, lost. Other results have followed, no less detrimental to the cause of Christ's kingdom on earth. The impression left by the establishment for centuries of a gigantic ecclesiastical empire, has tended to give undue importance to the *machinery of ecclesiastical government*, and to all *the external appointments* of the Church; these being really more prominent and important matters in an imperial church. It has taught men to think more of *ecclesiastical polity*, as that which is to bind Christians together, and less of the *brotherly tie* of fellowship, the power of which can only be fully developed in smaller or less complicated associations. In an overgrown church it may exist among the members of its separate congregations as such; or among the members of less regular religious societies and parties as such; but hardly among the members of the Church at large as such.

HERETICS.

Second Persecution, A.D. 95.

It is generally admitted, that St. John was banished by the Emperor Domitian; and the sentence makes part of what is called the Second Persecution of the Christians. Nevertheless, it can hardly be classed among the severe trials of the Church. Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla, members of the imperial family, are recorded amongst the victims; the former as suffering death, the latter, exile. It is, however, after all doubtful, whether these objects of tyrannical suspicion were charged with their real offences, or whether the imputation of "Atheism" and "Jewish manners" may not have been the cloak for gratifying some personal dislike, or allaying some personal dread, which Domitian did not choose to avow. No more were made partners of their persecution than were probably sufficient to give colour to its justice; and were it not that

among these the last apostle is numbered, all mention of it might be well omitted. Such as it was, it ceased with the death of the emperor.

At this season, however, the Church began to feel the influence of a more powerful enemy, perhaps, than the sword of persecution. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the attempts of the unconverted Jews to direct the civil powers of the world against Christians were few and feeble. The converted Jews had less spirit, and less show of reason, to contend for the eternal obligation of the Mosaic law on Christians. It was no longer deemed necessary to enforce those restrictions, therefore, on the Jewish and proselyted converts, which before that signal event prudence had suggested. From the Jews, and from the disposition to Judaize Christians, the Church was comparatively secure. In proportion, however, as this relief was obtained, a new evil began to spring up. The unconverted Gentiles were henceforth the chief movers of calumny and accusation. It was now palpably the interest of a great body of them to be so. From a portion of the converted Gentiles, too, more than from those who had been Jews, the Gospel was threatened with corruption. It was not now so much an adulterous union between the Mosaic law and the Christian, as between Gentile philosophy and Christian truth, against which the defender of the faith had to contend. And here it might be expected, that at least the Judaizing portion of the Church would have been firm resisters of this most unnatural union, —but they were perhaps the weaker party, and were even more readily seduced than their brethren of Gentile origin. The reason was this: with the Jews of Alexandria, and, through them, very generally with the Jews of all parts, the experiment which was now to be tried on the Christians had been made, and made with eminent success. Long before the establishment of the Eclectic sect in Egypt, the principles on which it was formed had influenced the philosophical speculations at Alexandria; and several tenets of the Greek Wisdom had been admitted into the Oriental schools, and still more of Orientalism into those of the Grecian philosophy. Plato's system, from its fanciful assemblage of *ideas*, was the most readily identified or amalgamated with the Eastern theory of emanations. But the Peripatetic and Stoic were soon found equally pliant and yielding to the ingenuity of men once practised in the method of harmonizing and reconciling. Both, no less than the Academic, agreed indeed in the fundamental point of theology with the Eastern creed, *viz.* that the Deity was the soul of the world, or the universe itself. The Epicurean system was the most stubborn, but even this was gradually tortured, until it was made to furnish some evidence to the shifting views of these theorists. Meanwhile, in this rage for philosophic liberality, the ancient and august character of the Mosaic revelation, and the reverence with which it was observed by so large a portion of the inhabitants of Alexandria

Causes of the Gnostic Heresy.

especially,—the great laboratory in which all these experimentalists were at work,—could not but tempt them to tamper with this institution also. Many of the Jews were persuaded into a notion, that part of the Gentile theories must have been portions of patriarchal revelation, and worthy of being believed and applied to the elucidation of the Mosaic. The infection had spread far and wide through the nation at the period of the Messiah's coming; and many of those Jews who became converts to Christianity, carried with them into the Church the tenets and the spirit of Gnosticism. Even during the ministry of St. Paul we recognise the use of the word *gnosis*, (γνῶσις,) applied as it began to be to an *esoteric* doctrine,—a refined and cabbalistic interpretation of the Gospel,—a system which in the apostle's own words was "falsely called *gnosis* or knowledge." Before the close of the first century, however, the warning voice of Paul required the support of the last survivor of the apostles. The "foolish questions" and the "endless genealogies," from which the former had endeavoured to divert the attention of the Christian inquirer, were becoming more and more objects of interest. Foolish questions or inquiries into the absolute nature of God, led (as they must ever lead men) to absurdity and impiety—to those wild speculations concerning the successive generations of Æons,—the emanations of the Divine essence,—and all the metaphysical subtilties of Orientalism, to which St. John briefly, and in the spirit of one dismissing idle discussion by a few authoritative assertions, adverts in the commencement of his Gospel.

1 Tim. vi.20; i. 4; Tit. iii. 9; Col. ii. 8.

Its Authors.

The authors of this progressive heresy are stated by historians to have been Simon Magus, Menander, Dositheus, Cerinthus, and others of inferior note.

Whatever mischief, however, these may have caused to the Church, all of them cannot properly be called heretics. To begin with Simon Magus. The character of this impostor is decidedly not that of a heretic, but of an infidel and blasphemer.[119] Supposing him to be the same named in the Acts, (which supposition rests on uncontradicted tradition,) he was by birth a Samaritan, who, having travelled to Egypt, came home imbued with the oriental philosophy, which he taught to his countrymen, claiming for himself the rank of Æon or superior emanation from the Deity. When Christ was preached abroad, he found no difficulty in admitting the Divine authority of his mission; and merely contended that he himself was a superior Æon, who with his wife or concubine Helena had become incarnate since the Messiah. With such an object, supported by blasphemy and imposture like this, Simon was rather the first of the false Christs whom our Lord foretold, than an heretical follower. It is well known, that in order to make it seem that his authority

Simon Magus.

Acts viii. 9.

119 So Justin Martyr, as quoted by Eusebius, καὶ μὲ ἀ τὴν ἀνάληψιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς οὐρανὸν, προεβάλοντο οἱ δαίμονες ἀνθρώπους τινὰς, λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι θεούς.—Σίμωνα μέν τινα Σαμαρείτα, κ. τ. λ. Justin, Ap. 1 Euseb. Lib. II. C. 13.

was, like that of Jesus, Divine, he practised magic, and performed false miracles; nor, with this general view of his character and manners, is the story in itself improbable which historians tell of his death at Rome; that it was occasioned by a fall, namely, in attempting to fly from the Capitol. No miracle would have been more worthy of the impostor's ambition, than that which should make him seem to the Jews to fulfil the desired sign of the Son of man descending from the clouds of heaven. Notwithstanding the glaring absurdity of his pretensions, it is no slight proof of the prevailing bias of men's minds towards the Oriental and Gnostic fancies, that he not only was attended during his life by a numerous train of adherents, but that as late as the third and even the fourth century, there continued to exist a sect, who claimed him as their founder,—still believed in his doctrine, and paid him the honours and worship due to his assumed nature. The assertion that a statue was erected to him at Rome has been doubted, and the fact ascribed to the ignorance or credulity of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others. The story is improbable, but the testimony is strong, because derived from so many consenting witnesses.

Menander.

The next place in the list of heretics is assigned to Menander; by some supposed to have been a disciple of Simon.[120] As far as any clear and plausible account of him can be collected from the notices of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Justin Martyr, he has been as improperly ranked among the disciples of that famous magician, as among the Christian heretics. Like Simon, he is said to have been by birth a Samaritan, and, like Simon, to have taken advantage of the reigning taste of the times, to make himself appear to his countrymen and the world "some great one," and "the power of God." Thus, he might have introduced himself into notice by admitting the Divine nature of Jesus, as Simon did; and even of that impostor also, reserving for himself the character of an Æon still nearer than either to the fountain of Deity. The doctrine of emanations was obviously suited to the spirit of imposture, and was naturally the doctrine of each false Christ in succession. Yet was it not the prevalence of that doctrine alone which caused such numbers to submit to similar delusions one after another; but rather the universal expectation of a great deliverer, which those who were dissatisfied with the kind of deliverance offered by Jesus and his followers, continued fondly to look for. Love of novelty might account for the formation of one such sect as these; but the ready obedience of new disciples to the call of every similar pretender, could only have arisen from the "fulness of the time." Menander's talent for supporting his imposture was probably not equal to that of Simon; for he is less famous in Ecclesiastical legends, and his sect soon ceased to be noticed by historians.

[120] Euseb. Hist. Lib. III. C. 26, on the authority of Justin.

Dositheus. Another of these impostors, whose name has been connected with the history of the early Church, is Dositheus. His life and tenets are still more obscure than those of the preceding, but his main object appears to have been the same. By some he has been made a disciple,[121] by others, the preceptor of Simon. Neither is likely; as far as we can trace his course, it evinced more enthusiasm than knavery, such as Simon's was; and was quickly terminated. Having failed to obtain credit with the Jews, he proclaimed himself to the Samaritans as the Messiah, and an attempt having been made by the High Priest to apprehend him, he took refuge in a cave, wherein he perished.[122] Still, the same cause which prolonged the existence of the Magian sect, kept alive for centuries the faith and the hopes of his party,—if, at least, from him was derived the sect of Dositheans, whose existence in Egypt as late as the sixth century is well attested.[123]

Cerinthus. Of heretics, properly so named, Cerinthus was perhaps the first. By some he is said to have flourished in the beginning of the second century; but the assertions of the early writers, that the rise of his sect was one cause of the publication of St. John's Gospel, together with the internal evidence contained in that Gospel to the fact, makes it more than probable, that his proper place in ecclesiastical record is the close of the first century. In the romantic and fabling spirit of the times, some have ventured to represent him as the great antagonist on whom the spiritual prowess of Christ's champion, St. John, was proved; as that of St. Peter had been on Simon Magus.[124] This may, perhaps, afford an additional ground for presuming that they were contemporary, however decidedly we reject the stories themselves.

Cerinthus was a Jew, and one of those who had deeply imbibed the tenets of Orientalism. He became a convert to Christianity, with his fancy over-excited, his judgment perplexed, and his very affections, which the Gospel was calculated to arrest and sober, so misguided by his previous habits of religious meditation, that he looked on his new system of faith with the same nervous and irritable view, with which the great arithmetician was said to perceive only number in all the variety of scenes he beheld. The visionary *pleroma*, filled with the Divine essence, emanating from its source with gradually decreasing brightness, and passing thus through all nature until it was traced imperceptibly to matter, and as such losing its original character of excellence, and assuming that of evil—all this haunted his mind like an enchantment; and he thought on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, only to find their respective places in this emblazonry of fancy. In the ingenious attempts to harmonize Judaism and Orientalism, the most revolting part of the

[121] Recognitiones Clementis, Lib. II. C. 8. [122] Epiphan. Hæres. XIII. Lib. 1.
[123] Moshemii de Reb. Christ. ante Const. Sect I. § 65.
[124] The legend of Cerinthus in the Bath, and the like.

process had already settled in his mind. Much of the grosser and more offensive tenets of the Eastern Wisdom had been softened down, to effect an union with the faith of the Mosaic revelation. The Creator of the world, for instance, was no longer, as formerly, represented as an evil and opposite principle to good, but only as a subordinate Æon, whose work was imperfect, and now become so corrupt, that there was need of a superior Æon to restore it. Such an one he beheld in Christ, the Word incarnate. How far he pursued his system of adapting the various doctrines of Christianity to philosophy is uncertain; but, doubtless, much of the Valentinian heresy, which arose immediately after, existed in his theory. Considering the spiritual and material worlds as both derived from the same origin, he supposes two classes of principles, (δύναμεις,) the one active, the other passive, the one consisting of male Æons, the other of female. From the source of Deity, by a union with thought or silence, were produced successive pairs of these Æons, the first of which was Mind and Truth; lower in the scale, the Word, Man, and the Church; and far lower still, the Creator, whose imperfect power and wisdom had produced the necessity of an incarnation, and of all the Christian scheme.[125] To all these idle and impious fancies, engendered, as it would seem, in the full sunshine of truth, we should pay little regard if recorded of an individual alone; but the attention is detained, and reason is staggered, at the record of numbers joining in a view of revelation such as this; combining through centuries, like the successful builders of a spiritual Babel; and so established in their creed, as to branch out into subdivisions and sects, all maintaining the great principles of Gnosticism. It is the feeling of each age, to be amazed and scandalized at the absurdity or impiety of notions worn out by time; even while it is itself, perhaps, affording matter for the reprehension and scorn of future generations. Scarce less contempt and censure do we pass on the Gnostics of old, than did those Gnostics on the idol-worshippers, from whose impurities and vanities they had extricated themselves. On us, and on every age, the moral presses strongly and beneficially. Other prejudices, than those of a "vain philosophy," may betray the Christian of the nineteenth century, and of ages more enlightened still, into errors which, in him, are equally unworthy of the God whom he worships. Collectively as a Church, no less than as individuals, we are to the end of time in a state of trial; and it is well to look back on these monstrous pictures of the past, if the retrospect suggests to us self-mistrust, self-watchfulness, and prayer for light and guidance from above.

The opening of St. John's Gospel directed against the Cerinthians.

It was against the heresy of Cerinthus that St. John is said to have asserted in the beginning of his Gospel, the eternity of the Word—that the Word which was made flesh was no emanation,

[125] Bruckeri Hist. Philosophiæ, Tom. III. p. 291.

but was originally with God, and was God. To other features of this heresy, he is supposed occasionally to point in his writings; the whole tone of which, of the Gospel especially, indicates a design to inculcate the doctrine of Christ's real and perfect divinity, in opposition to the conclusions which were drawn from these principles of Cerinthus; as, that he was inferior to God the Father, that he was a mere man while on the cross, and separated from the Æon who possessed his frame, &c. Even those, accordingly, who do not name Cerinthus and his sect as the occasion of this additional Gospel history being written by the apostle in his latter days, point to its spiritual character; and relate that it was composed with a view to represent Christ more in his Divine nature, and especially in that early part of his history, which had been hitherto chiefly occupied with his earthly birth and parentage.

Reason for the progress of Gnosticism.

If it be asked, how it happened, that errors like those above described should have passed current with men accustomed to scriptural religion founded on miraculous evidence;—with Jews, who had received the Law on the testimony of Moses and his miracles;—with Christians, whose belief was grounded on a similar foundation,—the reason some have assigned is the following:—The artful founders of Gnosticism, in recommending the Oriental philosophy to the Jews originally, were sensible of the difficulty: they perceived that it was not enough in this case, as in the attempt to reconcile their system with that of Plato, or Aristotle, or Zeno, to make its several parts harmonize and represent those of the other. There was one ingredient wanting, which neither Orientalism nor any human system of religion claimed or rested on—an ingredient peculiar to the truth, and that was, evidence. In order to supply this want, it was found expedient to challenge as authority, the very same source to which the Jews themselves were accustomed to appeal. These secrets of revelation, they pretended, had been given from the beginning, together with what was contained in the Jewish Scripture. Adam, they said, received them,—the patriarchs received them,—and through them they were communicated to certain ancient sages, the especial confidants and guardians of holy wisdom. Whilst divine faith was presented to mankind in a homely garb, suited to vulgar apprehensions, this key to its real nature was thus preserved in the keeping of a few.[126] In short, theirs, according to their representation, was the *Esoteric* doctrine of religion, as that contained in Scripture had been the *Exoteric*. Recalled for testimony to an early age, to names of whom a blind reverence made it nearly blasphemy to doubt aught; and probably so bewildered in their view of the question, as to confound scepticism, concerning the fact of these holy men *having received* the communications pretended, with doubt as to the *validity* of *their*

[126] Bruckeri Hist. Philosophiæ, Tom. II. p. 924—949.

evidence, if given to such a fact, what wonder that many should fall into the snare? The experience of every age justifies the great historian of Greece, in the conclusion to which he was led, by his attempt to ascertain the grounds on which so much idle fable had been received as truth by his countrymen.[127] Men will not take the trouble to search after truth, if any thing like it is ready provided to their hands; and from this fate religious truth itself is not exempted.

[127] Lib. I. C. 20.

PART III.

AGE OF THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

From A.D. 100—167.

With the removal of God's inspired servants from the scene, Ecclesiastical History assumes a widely different character from that which belongs to it during the record of their ministry. As long as their agency is employed, we look on with pious confidence in the wisdom of the measures pursued, and presume not to question the reasonableness of the objects effected. But, from the moment at which a transfer of authority is made to fallible rulers and teachers, these become amenable for the discharge of their trust to posterity, as well as to God; and it is our duty to inquire into the fidelity with which they have discharged it.

Gradual change from Inspired to Uninspired Church Government.

In no part of the Christian scheme is the Divine wisdom more apparent than in this transfer. It was begun early, long before the removal of the apostles; and was so gradually accomplished, that even the death of St. John occasioned no such dismay in the Church, as might have been expected at the extinction of the last star by which its course was to be directed. In the first instance, too, this transfer of authority was made to those who, for a season, had exercised it under the instruction of the apostles, and whom the loss of their inspired guides left, therefore, engaged in a routine of duty no longer new or doubtful. The change, immense as it was, came almost imperceptibly both on the Church and on its rulers.

Difficulties attendant on such a change.

No portion of the Christian scheme awakens a more anxious inquiry, than the interesting experiment which was thus made in first intrusting Christianity to uninspired guardians. For, although this was done under circumstances which approach the nearest to extraordinary Divine assistance, and the abruptness of leaving the Church at once to the ordinary help of the Spirit was thereby prevented; although, unlike succeeding rulers of the various Christian societies, the first uninspired authorities had received instruction immediately from the apostles, had acted for a time under their superintendence, and were, accordingly, trained in the practices, and taught the doctrines of their religion, in a way which might seem to have precluded the possibility of misapprehension,—still, they were liable to error; and error so near the source of Divine truth, seems the more likely to mingle and to flow on with it, and to pollute its remotest streams.

Of the primitive worthies, on whom this weighty responsibility devolved, the most conspicuous are known by the title of the APOSTOLICAL FATHERS, a term obviously derived from the peculiarity of character and circumstances to which I have been adverting. Others, indeed, may have been equally serviceable by their lives, and equally important to the age in which they flourished; but these have become eminently so to us by their writings, or, rather, the writings which have been transmitted to us as theirs. Apostolical Fathers.

In the catalogue of the apostolical Fathers we usually find the names of BARNABAS, HERMAS, CLEMENT, IGNATIUS, and POLYCARP. Barnabas. Why the first of these, himself an apostle of no small note, should be classed among the Fathers, it is difficult to understand. Among the works of the apostolical Fathers, is an Epistle claiming to be the production of Barnabas the apostle. Now, obviously, the only ground for classing this Epistle with these works, and not with the Scriptures, is that Barnabas did not write it; whilst the only reason for calling him an apostolical Father, is that he did write it. It is, in short, to suppose him at once, the author, and not the author. His Epistle.

One view alone can be at all compatible with this arrangement; which is, that the Epistle was originally his, but became so corrupted as to forfeit its scriptural character. This is possible; but this is not the view taken by the several disputants who from time to time have either advocated or condemned it *in toto*. And even then, although this solution might make the catalogue of the writings of these Fathers a convenient place for the degraded Scripture, it would not bring down the *author* to the level of the Fathers. His history, therefore, can only be placed properly where it has been already noticed, with that of the other apostles.

HERMAS is another apostolical Father, whose title is doubtful. Hermas. If his claim be good, he is the same with him whom St. Paul names at the close of his Epistle to the Romans; and he is so described by most of the early authorities. Many learned men of later times, however, offended at the character of his singular work, *The Shepherd*, have anxiously sought for external evidence against this identity; nor have they been unsuccessful. There is strong ground for supposing that *The Shepherd* was a production of the second century, and that the Hermas who wrote it was a brother of Pius, bishop of Rome.[1] Nevertheless, as the point is not quite incontrovertible, and as this extraordinary performance was once so famous as by some to be accounted Scripture,[2] Hermas may still, perhaps, be allowed to keep his place among the apostolical Fathers, subject to such a protest as the evidence against his claim may seem to require. Rom. xvi. 14. His *Shepherd*.

CLEMENT is more certainly identified with him whom St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, names as one of "his fellow- Clement.

[1] Moshemii De Rebus Christ. ante Const. p. 162.
[2] Irenæus apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. Lib. V. C. 8. Origen, too, considered it inspired.

labourers;"[3] and from the great number of writings which were made popular by the authority of his assumed name, he may be considered as the most distinguished among the apostolical Fathers. He was bishop of Rome by the appointment of St. Peter; and on the death of Anacletus, he appears to have united in his person the dignity which was before divided between St. Paul's successor and St. Peter's. Like most of the bishops of that dangerous see, he suffered martyrdom. Of his writings, only one Epistle has come down to us, the authenticity of which can be clearly made out. It is addressed from the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth. His Second Epistle, as it is called, if originally his, is confessedly very much changed from its original character. But, in truth, there is good reason to believe that no Epistle corresponding to this was ever written by Clement. Irenæus[4] was not acquainted with more than one, and his quotations prove that one to have been the first. Eusebius[5] mentions the second, but expressly states, that he could discover no ancient authority for it, and rejects it. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, all bear testimony to one only, the first. Two more have been found of late years, attached to a Syriac version of the New Testament, and were appended by Wetstein in his folio edition of the sacred volume. Allowing the full force of the evidence in favour of the genuineness of these, arising out of their scriptural language, and the absence of terms and topics which belong to a later period, still, this is counterbalanced by other internal evidence which is no less strong against it; and no trace of them is to be found in ancient writers.[6] About the spuriousness of the other pieces to which his name has been attached, there is no controversy.[7]

His Epistles.

Ignatius.

His Epistles.

The remains of IGNATIUS are less scanty, and yet these are confined to seven Epistles, written during a hasty and harassing journey from Antioch to Rome, for the purpose of being put to death at a public exhibition. No ancient writings have been more the subject of fraud and corruption than these.[8] Eusebius mentions seven genuine Epistles, which Pearson, in his *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ*, has very ably identified with that collection which is now called *The genuine Epistles*.[9] There is another collection of Ignatius's Epistles, of which the former are the basis, but they are most grossly altered and interpolated. A third set appears with his

[3] Phil. iv. 3. "Clement also, and other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life."

[4] Adv. Hæres. Lib. III. C. 3.

[5] Hist. Eccl. Lib. III. C. 38. "Οτι μηδὲ τοὺς ἀρχαίους αὐτῇ κεχρημέ νους ἴσμεν.

[6] For all the arguments against their authenticity, Lardner's *Dissertation on the Two Epistles* may be consulted.

[7] These are,

1. An *Epistle to James*, our Lord's brother.

2. *Recognitions*, in ten books.

3. *Clementina.*

4. *Apostolical Constitutions*, in eight books.

5. *Apostolical Canons.*

Of these, the *Recognitions* is the most ancient and the most valuable: it was written, probably, about the middle of the second century.

[8] Ignatius's Epistles were first published in Latin by Archbishop Usher, and afterwards in Greek by Vossius.

[9] See Eusebius, Lib. III. C. 36.

name, which are altogether a forgery. After all, too, although no one can deny the force of Bishop Pearson's arguments in disproving the authenticity of the longer Epistles, and establishing the preferable claims of the shorter, still, it is by no means clear, that the imposture practised on what we call the *Interpolated Epistles* was not an after attempt to carry too far, what had been more sparingly, more skilfully, and more successfully effected in the shorter Epistles; and that the genuine Epistles themselves have been tampered with. The temptation to such a proceeding was strong; and there are certainly not a few internal marks that it was practised. Ignatius was the disciple of St. John, and bishop of Antioch, and suffered martyrdom under Trajan, A.D. 108.

A.D. 108.

Polycarp.

The history of POLYCARP brings us much later into the annals of the Church. He suffered beyond the middle of the second century, and, like Ignatius, self-devoted for the purpose of diverting persecution from his brethren in Christ. He was that bishop or "angel" of the Church of Smyrna, of whom St. John makes so honourable mention in the book of Revelations; and the narrative of his death, which was drawn up by that Church, is peculiarly valuable. According to Irenæus,[10] he left behind him various writings. All that now remains, however, is an Epistle to the Philippians, and even of this the original Greek is imperfect, and the remainder only known through a Latin translation.

A.D. 167.

Rev. ii. 8–10.

Inquiries suggested by the lives of the Apostolical Fathers.

However worthy of pious contemplation a more detailed biography of these holy men may be, the most important, and the most interesting object after all, which is to be obtained from the study of their lives and writings, is, to ascertain how Christians behaved when first left to themselves; or, to speak more accurately, when for the first time left without any extraordinary Divine instruction and superintendence. However famous in their generation might be the names of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, to us they are most interesting as specimens of that generation; as representing in their lives and writings the opinions and the manners, the practice and the faith, which enjoyed the approbation of the primitive Church. Taking this, then, as the main object of inquiry, I shall not confine my view to their individual histories, but enlarge it from all sources of collateral information which may tend to make the sketch of primitive Christianity more complete or more faithful.

The leading questions to which we may expect such an inquiry to furnish replies, are,—

I. What parts of the apostolic ministry were intended for the *mere foundation of Christianity?*

II. What parts were intended for the *preservation* of it?

III. How *were these intentions* fulfilled in the ministry of the apostolical Fathers and their contemporaries?

[10] Cited by Eusebius, Hist. Lib. V. C. 20.

CHAPTER I.

What Parts of the Apostolic Ministry were Intended for the mere Foundation of Christianity?

Difference between the Divine and and Human economy.

In the formation of any society, nothing is more likely than that the means adopted for its first establishment should be also the means proposed for its continuance and security. Thus, the same institutions by which Lycurgus, or Solon, each established a community of that description which best pleased himself, were by them considered as the most conducive to perpetuate it in its genuine purity. This, indeed, will be mostly the case in all *human* societies. But the reverse occurs in the history of the Church. It was established by miracles exhibiting an infinite variety of superhuman power; it has been perpetuated without any. Its very rulers and agents (as if to make the contrast more striking) have not remained the same. The terms apostle, prophet, interpreter, &c., denote offices which seem to have been designed only for the formation of the Church; and, accordingly, to have been dropped on its complete establishment. Even some of the customary usages of Christianity partook of this temporary character; and these, if preserved, have been applied by the purest Churches to purposes different from those which they originally served.

Reasons for this difference.

The reason of this peculiarity in the character of the Christian society, or Church, is not simply that its object is spiritual, but consists in its particular mode of reference to that object. The Church was founded, not that new truths should be revealed through it, but to preserve a revelation already made. The distinction is very important, and although so obvious as not to require any proof, deserves to be familiarized to the mind in every possible way. The Church was founded by miracles; and the Christian is often tempted, rather hastily, to assert that God might, if it had been requisite, properly and consistently have perpetuated it by miracles. But that this cannot be the case, a moment's reflection will lead us to determine. Miracles are the appropriate evidence of one who has himself received a miraculous communication; but what purpose would miracles serve for attesting a revelation *fully given* to a preceding generation? A Christian who in the nineteenth century should perform miracles, would naturally be regarded as giving evidence of his possessing, not merely the Christian truths as hitherto

revealed, but some new light also. A miracle, and a new revelation, go together; when the one ceases, the other also is withdrawn. For what is the import of a miracle? A miracle is a change in the order of the visible and material universe, and therefore an appropriate indication that some corresponding spiritual or moral change has taken place. It is *the sign of God revealing and appointing*, and is inconsistent with the permanent course of an appointment once made. God's first great miracle was the creation and the establishment of the order of the universe; and this being done, the system was left to work as by a power created with it. God's last great scene of miracles was, the revelation of the Christian scheme; and this being established, its continuance is, in like manner, left to the ordinary operation of that appointment.

Miracles the signs of a new Revelation.

If, on the other hand, Christ and his apostles had taught Christianity *partially*, had only revealed part of the religious knowledge which was designed for the world; in this case it is very conceivable, that until such knowledge should be complete, individuals in the Church, from time to time, or a regular succession of persons, should have been inspired; and the new light would in each case have required the power of working miracles. The Pope's infallibility supposes such a need; and if it be well founded, every successive Pope, as long as the age of infallibility lasts, ought to have this power; because infallibility is the power of revealing on any given point, and supposes, therefore, a constant extraordinary intercourse with God; which has never been found separate from the power of working miracles. The withdrawing of this Divine power would in this, as in all other cases, be the negative sign that the infallibility had ceased.

Unnecessary if a Revelation be complete.

But, it may be said, that although the connexion between a miracle and a new revelation be reasonable in theory, do we really find it in the history of God's dealings? The Mosaic revelation was established by miracles; but miracles did not cease with the death of Moses and Aaron, or even of their immediate successors. To this the reply is very obvious. The Mosaic revelation contained neither all, nor, perhaps, the most considerable portion of that stock of Divine truth, for the preservation of which the Israelites were formed into a Church. Miracles were from time to time performed; but by whom, and for what purpose? By the prophets; who attested thereby the Divine communication of *new light*, which from time to time was added to the former, and which did not complete the sum of the old revelation, until four hundred years before the coming of Christ. It was then that they were left with the Old Testament complete, to employ it to their benefit, or to abuse its light, as they chose. Occasionally, too, the performance of miracles arose out of a peculiarity of the old dispensation, which is scarcely ever sufficiently attended to in the parallels drawn between God's former and present Churches. They were the *temporal* enactments

Why continued after Moses.

of God, as the extraordinary *temporal* Ruler of the Iraelites; and had Christ established a kingdom of this world, then, and in that case only, might we expect a corresponding interference of miraculous power.

Or the Patriarchs.

To the patriarchal dispensation, as it is termed, the same remarks are still more applicable. New revelations were continually wanted, and appropriate miraculous interpositions occurred. Every revelation was planted by these extraordinary means; and whenever one of God's servants arose to work fresh miracles, it was to establish some new truth.

Arguments against their future revival.

Notwithstanding, therefore, the pious hope of many good Christians, that miracles may perhaps be once more permitted for the speedier conversion of the heathen, there is, even in this pious hope, something perhaps inconsistent with the *sufficiency* of the New Testament revelation. A power of working miracles would place the missionary in a new character. If wrought in testimony of his preaching, his language would become equivalent to holy Scripture. He would no longer be a minister of the New Testament record; and even if he preached no new doctrine, he must be supposed to preach, not as from the Bible, but by revelation,—as one guarded against error, and inspired with correct views, in the same manner as the apostles. It should be recollected, too, that Christianity can now be proved, to any mind capable of understanding it, by the various sources of testimony which we ordinarily use. Miracles were employed at first, because no other testimony belonged to it; but, although Gentiles and Jews were directed to search the Old Testament for authority, would it not have been strange to have found the apostles performing miracles to attest the ministry of Moses or Isaiah? Equally so would it be, under any circumstances, for a modern preacher of the Gospel to be furnished with miraculous testimony in support of the apostolical ministry. The volume of revelation has been closed and sealed. Christ's kingdom is come. Miraculous interposition *now* would indicate that the Christian scheme hitherto has not conveyed all the truth requisite for mankind; and the assumption of a power of revelation, or infallibility, amounts to the same thing.[11]

Unwillingness of the Church to surrender this power.

All miracles, then, may be considered as forming that part of the apostles' ministry intended for the establishment, and not for the preservation, of Christianity, whether these miracles were Signs and Wonders, or Spiritual Gifts. At the same time, as nothing could be so mortifying to the pride of the Church as the loss of this splen-

[11] Of course any miracle, which was the fulfilment of a prophecy delivered during the inspired age, would not be inconsistent with this view, *e.g.* the interference of the Almighty to prevent the building of the temple at Jerusalem; for which there is certainly sufficient evidence in the case of Julian's attempt, and which would, no doubt, be repeated, if ever a similar emergency required it. That Julian did encounter miraculous opposition, has been placed beyond all reasonable doubt by Warburton. See his "Discourse on the attempt of the Emperor Julian to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem."

did power, many might be expected to repeat the attempt to perform them again and again, after this power was withdrawn, with the fond hope that the attempt might be successful. Any occasional appearance of success would be hailed, from time to time, by the superstitious, as an omen of returning miraculous agency, and would afford a ready instrument for fraudulent practices, as the Church began to offer temptation to ambition or avarice. No wonder, then, that the notice of miracles extends through its history; and that, however inconsistent with the character of God's final dispensation, they should become the constant boast of Christians, exactly in proportion as that dispensation has been least understood.

Similar cessation of customs connected with Miracles.

But not only miracles ceased, because designed solely for the establishment of the Church; but the obligation to perpetuate those customs which were connected with miraculous agency ceased also together with it. As instances of these, may be noticed the practice of anointing the sick, and that of laying on of hands by the apostles, subsequent to baptism.

Unction of the Sick.

The first of these customs, evidently, was established as a form of miraculous cure. It was, no doubt, the mode in which the apostles fulfilled the Lord's especial injunction to "heal the sick." When, therefore, such cures ceased, the cessation itself was equivalent to a formal annulment of the practice by God. Nevertheless, as nothing could have been more mortifying to the spiritual pride of a Christian, than the loss of so splendid an appendage to the Church as miraculous power, (agreeably to the remarks above made,) the designing, the superstitious, and, perhaps, the truly pious themselves, would naturally be slow to admit the evidence that its virtue had ceased. To the dying man and to his distressed friends, even the faintest possibility of success would be a sufficient motive for the experiment. Thus it would be continued, by some from a hope that its efficacy might be renewed; by others, from reverence for a custom, which, although ineffectual, had once been blessed by the Spirit; by others, finally, it would be persisted in from a view, created by enthusiasm or fraud, that where no palpable miracle was wrought, a secret miraculous influence must be communicated in lieu of the specific benefit attached to it. Hence, in latter ages, its invariable use in a great part of the Christian world as a means of grace to the departing Christian. Had the custom, when its miraculous use ceased, been in its nature at all applicable to edification, the reverence which retained it for such a purpose, in preference to the introduction of any new ceremony, would have been even praiseworthy. As it is, its preservation in the Greek and Roman Churches is a curious monument of human weakness.

Imposition of hands after Baptism.

The origin and meaning of Confirmation, as performed by the apostles, have been elsewhere explained. The apostles used to lay their hands on those who had been baptized, in order that they might receive some spiritual gift,—that is, some miraculous sign

that the unseen descent of the Holy Ghost on them at baptism was real.[12] None but an apostle could do this, and it was done, sometimes immediately on baptism, sometimes after a long interval; but all Christians seem to have claimed it as a privilege, whenever they had opportunity of receiving it. The rite was called *confirmation*, and the gift, the sign of confirming.

Confirmation.

Reasons for retaining this usage.

Properly, then, confirmation was a temporary usage, connected with a miraculous display, and, indeed, appended to the apostolical office, together with which it ceased. Like the unction of the sick, however, it was still kept up by those who succeeded the apostles in the government of the Churches, but apparently from a more rational respect for a rite with which such important results had been so long associated. Between the apostolical Church and that even which immediately followed it, no difference could have been more remarkable than that arising from the increased proportion of infants baptized. Hence arose one of the first demands on the uninspired Church for its discretionary power in matters left indeterminate. Those Christians admitted to a participation of the Sacrament before they could, "by reason of their tender years," be taught the meaning of the rite, seemed to require some further formal and public ceremony, in order to enable the Church to discharge its duty of solemnly informing them of this meaning, whenever they should be capable of receiving the information. The apostolical rite of confirmation had been already made sacred in the eyes of Christians, and would on that account be far preferable to any new form which might have been appointed for the new object required. It was more—its former object was, to a certain extent, analogous to that for which it was now adopted. It had once solemnized the visible sign of assurance to the baptized, that he was a portion of the Christian temple; its present object was to awaken the baptized to an inquiry into the evidence which he then possessed of the same state of grace. Hence, in the most judicious ecclesiastical regulations, it is made to take place when the mind is supposed to be just capable of appreciating the evidences of Christianity, and the Christian is capable of beneficially partaking of those rites by which he celebrates and renews his spiritual union with Christ. It is not a sacrament, nor would that Church be unapostolical which should reject it; but it is the most venerable institution of the uninspired Church, and the object of it is so consonant to Christian principles, that if such a form had never been used by the apostles, that object would, doubtless, still have been provided for by their successors.

Not a Sacrament.

Another branch of the Christian institution, which was designed only for the foundation of Christianity, and not for its perpetuation,

[12] See Mark xvi. 17, 18, where confirmation is promised indiscriminately to all believers, and the particular gifts specified. St. Paul must allude to this in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. i. 11; "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." At that time the Church at Rome had not yet, it would seem, been visited by an apostle.

consists in those ministerial offices, the essential characteristic of which was the display of miraculous power. If miracles have been shown to be inconsistent with a perfect and established dispensation, of course we should be startled to find any good evidence for the continuance of such offices in the Church. But no such evidence exists. The writings of the apostolical Fathers are not only without the mention of the terms apostles, interpreters, prophets, &c., as denoting offices in the Church, but they speak a language incompatible with the continuance of these ministerial functions under any name. Indeed, there seems to have been no slight scruple in the primitive Church on this point. For although the apostolic order, for instance, was in some respects succeeded and represented by the race of uninspired rulers on whom devolved the government of the Church, yet they presumed not to apply to themselves the title of apostles. It might have led to the error of supposing that the essential and characteristic point, infallibility, had descended to them. And although, in the case of confirmation, they scrupled not to apply to a new rite the name and circumstances of one antiquated, because in that case no mistake was possible; yet in this instance error would have been at once more likely to occur, and more dangerous. The Church would never have borne the claim of a Clement or an Ignatius to be, *in all respects*, the successors of St. Peter and St. Paul; and whatever ambition may have been dormant in the infant society, it was necessary that some generations should pass away, and the office and character of an apostle of Christ be less distinctly present to men's minds, before the fraud should be even practicable.

Cessation of Inspired Ministerial Offices.

Among the offices created solely for the foundation of the Church, there was one, indeed, which was not necessarily connected with miraculous power,—that of deaconesses. Concerning the origin and peculiar need of this, enough, perhaps, has been said in the preceding pages. Its continuance was prolonged for some centuries after the apostolic era; and may, doubtless, be with propriety revived, whenever a similar emergency shall call for it.

Deaconesses.

CHAPTER II.

What Parts of the Apostolical Ministry were Designed for the Perpetuation of Christianity.

The want of Miracles and Inspiration, how supplied.

To the apostolical age the Divine origin of Christianity was satisfactorily attested by miracles and miraculous gifts; the knowledge and the practice of it, too, must have been well understood and familiarized to the various societies of Christians which so long enjoyed the instruction and superintendence of the apostles and their fellow ministers: but the apostolical ministry not being designed for the benefit of that age only, some provision was to be made for perpetuating the doctrines and the practices which had been thus established.

Written Record.

Of these the first which presents itself to notice is *a written record*. For the establishment of Christianity, the apostles were commissioned to preach, and to confirm their preaching by miracles: for the perpetuation of Christianity, they were commissioned, *first*, to register the substance of their preaching; *secondly*, to provide means for making this register equivalent to the word divinely preached; and *thirdly*, to provide a channel of evidence to attest the sacred character of that register. These two last objects were effected by forming Christians into perpetual societies. Had the Christian revelation been left to a record without a Church, it must ever have been liable to two mischances: first, it would have been the property of the learned only—a mere branch of philosophy; secondly, all connected chain of evidence for its scriptural character would soon have been lost. Had it been left unrecorded to the various Christian societies, it must soon have been corrupted and changed.

The very form of the New Testament Scriptures indicates their dependence on some further act of apostolical ministry, such as was the formation of Christian societies. For, beyond the primary benefit which the Scriptures derive from the Church, in the provision of an unbroken and perpetual channel for evidence;—beyond this, the total absence of systematic instruction from them implies, that the sacred record was accommodated to the existence of a Church; into whose charge should be intrusted the mode of teaching the doctrines, and of applying the principles which that record preserved.

Among the various writings of which the New Testament is composed, there can be no doubt that the four Gospels, the Revelation of St. John, and the Acts of the Apostles, must have been intended as perpetual records. In writing or inditing the Gospels, the apostles were performing for posterity their primary office of *Witnesses*. We should naturally expect from some of them, that in their character of expounders of the Gospel scheme, of *ministers of the Spirit*, they would in like manner have laboured partly for future ages. And yet Epistles, and these too abounding in matters of temporary concern, might leave some room for questioning whether the instruction of future generations was contemplated by the writers. The question is not material; for, after all, the ministry of the apostles was really the ministry of the Holy Ghost; and whether that Divine Ruler chose to employ his servants in a sphere of ministry even greater than its extent appeared to *them*, or not; doubtless, the instruction of posterity was the main purpose for which those Epistles were inspired. And it was so, because such is the main purpose which they have served, and for which no other provision has been made. From the Gospels and the Acts we might have learned all the facts of inspired history; but, like the apostles at the close of their Lord's ministry, we should have wanted not merely an historical remembrancer "to call all things to our mind," but some further infallible expositor "to teach us all these things,"—to teach us the full meaning of all that had been done and registered. The epistolary form in which this has been accomplished might create a question, as to whether the apostles themselves understood that they were doing this for posterity as well as for their immediate charges; but that this was even the *principal* design of the Holy Spirit, is a view scarcely to be controverted. More; the careful manner in which these Epistles were preserved, transcribed, and circulated, from the earliest times, is a strong presumption that they were from the very first considered in this light. It was this, perhaps, more than personal respect for the memory of the writers, which caused them to be so carefully kept and transmitted. Nor can the occasional topics with which they are occupied be regarded as certain proof that even the apostles' views were confined to the instruction of those immediately addressed; for although the Epistle to the Colossians, for instance, contains some peculiar allusions to the state of the Church at Colosse;[13] yet we know that this was sent with a special charge to transmit it for the perusal of the Laodiceans; and to obtain from them the perusal of one which St. Paul appears to have written to that Church. Why may not St. Paul, and the other writers of the Epistles of the New Testament, in like manner, have contemplated the perusal of every Epistle which they wrote, by every Church in every generation?

The Epistle framed for general instruction.

[13] See particularly ch. iv. 8—10; and again, ver. 17.

It is to be observed, too, that among these Epistles are some which really deserve the name of treatises; although, having been addressed to particular Churches or bodies of Christians, they may in one sense be called Epistles. Such are the Epistles To the Romans, and To the Hebrews.

The New Testament its own Expositor.

In considering, then, the New Testament record as one of the measures for perpetuating Christianity, its twofold character should be carefully kept in view. It is a record of facts; and so far answers to the primary character of Christ's apostles, his witnesses.[14] It is, beyond this, a record of the interpretation of the Christian scheme, which was made up of those facts; and, so far, corresponds to the secondary office of the apostles,—that of ministers of the Spirit. It contains not only a revelation, properly so called, but the infallible interpretation and unfolding of it. It was purposely so framed as to preclude the need of that which was not to be perpetuated,—an unerring expositor.

Reasons for the formation of the Church,

The sacred record, then, is most strictly a substitute for all the apostolical instruction. But the apostolical instruction was preserved pure and entire in the preaching of the apostles by the Holy Spirit's extraordinary suggestions and corrections, and it was authenticated by testimonial miracles. An ordinary and permanent provision was requisite to compensate for all this when withdrawn; and, accordingly, these were among the objects contemplated in the formation of *the Church*. In furnishing a channel of perpetual evidence, it served the same purpose to the record, as did the testimonial miracles to the apostles' preaching; in preserving the record entire and uncorrupt, it would do that which the Holy Spirit's suggestions and corrections had done for the unrecorded revelation, when only existing in the memories and minds of the apostles.

and its distribution into separate Societies.

The Church, then, was the second great provision made for the perpetuation of Christianity. But its importance was not confined to its character as a safeguard, or as a channel of evidence. The Scriptures were so left as to depend on its operations, for the most efficacious employment and dispensation of the holy truths which they contained. With every change of language, of climate, of prejudice, and of all circumstances whatever arising out of religion, or accidentally interfering with it, the Gospel would require to be taught in a somewhat different form. Truths which for any reason had become subject to controversy or misapprehension, would need a solemn specification in the formula of a creed or an article; and the young and the newly initiated would require to receive instruction in that particular form which might put them on their guard against those errors to which they were most exposed. Change of manners,

[14] Herein more particularly we recognise the fulfilment of the Lord's prophecy respecting the office of the Holy Spirit. "He shall testify (or witness) of me; and ye *also* shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."—John xv. 26, 27.

of climate, of government, and especially of the relative situation between the Church and State, would present exigencies which could only be properly met by the enactments of an authorized body. All these are further purposes for which Christians were formed into societies, and which that portion of the apostolical ministry appears to have effected.

Necessity for incorporation with it.

Still, we should form a very inadequate view of the benefits of the social connexion between Christians, if we only regarded it as a provision, facilitating and adjusting the other provisions made by the Holy Spirit for perpetuating religion. More was intended, and more has been accomplished by it. It is one of the appointed means of salvation; its character is, in short, sacramental. Although it is true, that the individual welfare or misery of every Christian will, according to the Gospel scheme, be separately determined, and sentence be passed, not on churches, but on individuals; yet it is no less certain, that the means of obtaining future reward, and of avoiding future punishment, are not appointed to be communicated to men otherwise than as members of a social body. Every promise of the Gospel is limited to such as shall thus associate themselves with a church. It is not by an exercise of faith, or by a confession of it, that we receive our first union with the Holy Spirit; but by the act of initiation into the Church; it is by baptism. We are not individually, but collectively, called by the apostle, "the temple of the Holy Ghost;" and he who expects to share in the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection, can only do so as a member of his body—a portion of his residence, the Church.

1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 20—22.

Objects of the Church.

The Church, then, considered as a provision for perpetuating Christianity, has four distinct offices: first, that of preserving the Scriptures; next, (which is closely connected with the former,) that of bearing witness to them; thirdly, that of judiciously dispensing the truths contained in them; and, lastly, it has the holy office of conveying grace. Accordingly, some of the several component parts of such a society, as well as its several institutions and enactments, are designed to fulfil, sometimes one, and sometimes another of these offices. In some instances more than one, or all, are to be recognised. For instance, as the channel for preserving and dispensing Gospel truth, it has ministers of different orders, and it establishes schools of religious instruction. Again, in its office of conveying to its members the grace of which it is the appointed means, it enjoins rites and ceremonies, and prescribes the form and manner of public prayers.

Recognised by the Apostles.

All these objects, then, being contemplated in the formation of the Church, the Church's separate functions were begun and sanctioned by the apostles before their departure from the scene. To the Church was left, before their departure, the full exercise of all these separate offices, whereby its character as a permanent pro-

vision may be understood and attested. It ordained ministers; it celebrated rites; it appointed schools, and prescribed other modes of religious instruction. Even as a channel of evidence to the Scriptures, it began to be recognised before the death of St. John, who, on Eusebius's positive testimony, lived to see the first scriptural deposit made and put in trust for posterity.[15]

But not only did the apostles thus fashion the Church, and see its several functions in exercise before their deaths; provision was also made for its security and continuance. Itself appointed to preserve religion, it required some special provision for its own preservation:[16] and there was need that this too should be sanctioned by Divine authority, and illustrated by apostolical practice. Hence the exercise of Church discipline, as emanating from the Church, was commenced even during the ministry of St. Paul. His Epistle to the Corinthians proves that apostolical interference was made, not to supersede, but to enforce the pains and penalties of the Church. The same view may be obtained from the manner in which the bishops of the seven Churches of Asia are addressed in the book of Revelations. It was the more necessary that this point also should have been understood before the close of the Holy Ghost's extraordinary superintendence; that men may have the less plea to resort to a code of discipline foreign to the true character of the Church.

Apostolical origin of Church Discipline.

Before I proceed to a distinct examination of the manner in which the uninspired Church continued, after the removal of the apostles, to fulfil, in each of its departments, its character as a perpetual provision, one point must be settled. In order to judge how far the primitive Christians have been, or ourselves now are, true to our trust, it is necessary to determine how far the *discretionary* authority of the Church goes—what is the principle by which that authority is shaped and bounded?

Discretionary authority of the Church.

And first, it may be as well to get rid of a source of indistinctness and confusion, which is for ever encumbering discussions on this subject. We are wont to speak of the foundation of the Church,—the authority of the Church,—the various characteristics of the Church,—and the like, as if the Church were, originally at least, one society in all respects. From the period in which the Gospel was planted beyond the precincts of Judæa, this manifestly ceased to be the case; and as Christian societies were formed among people more and more unconnected and dissimilar in character and circumstances, the difficulty of considering the Church as one society increases. Still, from the habitual and unreflecting use of this phrase, "The Church," it is no uncommon case to confound the two notions; and occasionally to speak of the various societies of

In what sense the Church is One.

[15] Hist. Lib. III. C. 24.

[16] "There is one end of civil government peculiar to a good constitution, namely, the happiness of its subjects; there is another end essential to a good government, but common to it with many bad ones—its own preservation."—Paley's "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy," Vol. II. Book VI. Chap. 7.

Christians as *one;* occasionally as *distinct* bodies. The mischief which has been grafted on this inadvertency in the use of the term, has already been noticed; and it is no singular instance of the enormous practical results which may be traced to mere ambiguity of expression. The Church is undoubtedly *one*, and so is the human race one; but not *as a society*. It was from the first composed of distinct societies, which were called one, because formed on common principles. It is only one society, considered as to its future existence. The circumstance of its having one common head, Christ, one Spirit, one Father, are points of unity, which no more make the Church one society on earth, than the circumstance of all men having the same Creator, and being derived from the same Adam, renders the human race one political community. That Scripture often speaks of Christians generally under the term "The Church," is true; but if we wish fully to understand the force of the term so applied, we need only call to mind the frequent analogous use of ordinary historical language when no such doubt occurs. Take, for example, Thucydides's "History of the Peloponnesian War." It contains an account of the transactions of two opposed parties, each made up of many distinct communities; on the one side were democracies, on the other oligarchies. Yet precisely the same use is made by the historian of the terms "the democracy" and "the oligarchy," as we find Scripture adopting with regard to the term "The Church." No one is misled by these, so as to suppose the community of Athens one with that of Corcyra; or the Theban with that of the Lacedæmonians. When the heathen writer speaks of "the democracy of" or "in" the various democratical states, we naturally understand him to mean distinct societies *formed on similar principles;* and so, doubtless, ought we to interpret the sacred writers when they, in like manner, make mention of the Church of or in Antioch, Rome, Ephesus, Corinth, &c.

Reasons for this emphatic Unity derived from the Jewish dispensation.

But there was also an especial reason why the term Church should have been often used by the sacred writers as if it applied to one society. God's dispensation had hitherto been limited to a single society,—the Jewish people. Until the Gospel was preached, the Church of God *was* one society. It therefore sometimes occurs with the force of a transfer from the objects of God's *former* dispensation, to those of his *present* dispensation. In like manner, as Christians are called "the elect," their bodies "the temple," and their Mediator "the High Priest;" so their condition, as the objects of God's new dispensation, is designated by the term "the Church of Christ," and "the Church."

The Church in this sense a model for all Christian Societies.

The Church is one, then, not as consisting of one society, but because the various societies or churches were then modelled, and ought still to be so, on the same principles; and because they enjoy common privileges,—one Lord, one Spirit, one Baptism. Accordingly, the Holy Ghost, through his agents the apostles, has not left

any detailed account of the formation of any Christian society; but he has very distinctly marked the great principles on which all were to be founded, whatever distinctions may exist amongst them. In short, the foundation of the Church by the apostles was not analogous to the work of Romulus or Solon; it was not, properly, the foundation of Christian societies which occupied them, but the establishment of the principles on which Christians in all ages might form societies for themselves. What they did form, may be regarded rather as specimens and exemplifications of those principles. Agreeably to this view, in the application of these principles, some variety occurs in the history even of the earliest Churches. At the same time, the foundation-principles themselves recorded in the Scripture, and acted on by the inspired revealers of them, formed a conspicuous boundary to this discretionary power; and it is by those, accordingly, that our judgment is to be regulated in the proposed inquiry.

Its principles.

What, then, were these principles? As far as they coincided with those on which the old Church of God, the Jewish, was founded, it was not to be expected that any very express directions should be given. That in God's last social establishment, his revelation was thereby to be preserved and applied, as was the design of the Mosaic institution, was manifest; and the only question was, how far the method of doing this was changed? On this point it might be expected that no room should be left for doubt or misapprehension.

In what respect differing from those of the Mosaic institution.

The Christian Church Spiritual.

I. In the first place, then, God's ancient Church was established on earthly principles. It was a temporal government, in which his laws were enforced by temporal rewards and punishments. It was strictly a kingdom of this world. Hence arose the first distinct principle which it was requisite to specify. By our Saviour's death and removal from the world, connected with certain expressions of his, which at the time of their being spoken were so hard to be understood, we are instructed in this principle. A Christian society was to be purely *spiritual;* its objects,—its functions,—its connexions,—were all to be strictly separated from those of any worldly society; it was his whose "kingdom was not of this world." But most pointedly was this marked in the final establishment of Christianity. God became the ruler of his people permanently, in a way which precluded the possibility of attaching his residence and government *to any place* or sensible circumstance, such as characterise societies of this world. There was no temple—no visible high priest—no local medium of communication, to correspond with the residence of earthly rulers, and the circumstances of their supremacy. The time was then come, as Christ foretold to the Samaritan woman, when neither in Mount Gerizim, nor yet at Jerusalem, were men to "worship the Father;" but they that worshipped Him, were to do so "in spirit, and in truth."

John xviii. 36.

John iv. 21, 22

Universal.

II. In the second place, God's ancient Church was a *partial establishment.* Moses and the prophets were sent only to one nation;

and to them were limited all God's offers, promises, and threats. Here, then, was another material point of difference which it pleased God to draw between the former and the latter dispensation, and another rule to be specified. The *new* Church of God, as opposed to the *old*, was not only to be spiritual, but *universal;* and, accordingly, the command expressly was, "make disciples of *all nations.*" Until this new ordinance, part of the human race only was called God's own people; the rest were viewed in the light of foreigners, and were placed out of the pale of his peculiar government. Hence, among the various images by which this innovation of the Christian scheme is alluded to in our Saviour's language, Satan is represented as deprived of that portion of the world which, in a partial dispensation, was left to him. "The prince of this world" was now to surrender his claim, and *all* nations were invited by God to become subjects of the universal empire which he had established.

Matt. xxviii. 19.

III. A third circumstance about the Jewish Church, which was not to be perpetuated under the new dispensation, was, that its privileges were dispensed in *different degrees.* The native Jew enjoyed precedence, it was presumed, in the sight of the Almighty Ruler; his was the highest class of God's people. The proselyte of righteousness claimed the next rank, and was entitled to higher hopes and privileges than the humble proselyte of the gate. In the internal constitution of the Church itself was exhibited a continual gradation of religious rights. The temple was partitioned off by its courts and by its mystic veil, to indicate the remote, the nearer, and the nearest approach to the Divine presence. To the Levites a more intimate communication with God was assigned, than to the other tribes; and they again were excluded from the holy of holies, into which the high priest alone might enter. In God's new dispensation there were to be no corresponding distinctions. There were to be no degrees of Christianity. The veil of the temple had been rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Now there was to be not only "one Lord," but "one faith," "one baptism," one participation of every privilege for all nations and for all portions of the Church. Unity or oneness was to characterise the new Church, not less than spirituality or universality. This, although, considered abstractedly, it may seem the least of the innovations in the new form of God's kingdom, was, as appears from the preceding history, the most difficult to accomplish. It was the most obnoxious to Jewish prejudices, and is, accordingly, more darkly intimated than the others by our Lord himself;—in parables, for instance, such as that of the labourers in the vineyard, and in other indistinct allusions, which would be certainly understood, only when the event to which they pointed had taken place. It is from St. Paul's writings, and from the history of his labours, which were peculiarly devoted to the establishment of this principle, that it derives its clearest elucidation and sanction.

Uniform.

Eph. iv. 5.

Matt. xx. 1—16.

Limit to discretionary authority arising from these Principles.

The three great principles, then, on which every Church, or Christian society, was formed by the apostles, were SPIRITUALITY, UNIVERSALITY, and UNITY. Out of these arose one important limit to the discretionary powers of the uninspired Church, when deprived of extraordinary authority. It is of the last importance that this fact should be borne in mind, in every appeal to the practice and authority of the primitive Church. There is often (even among Protestant divines) a vague method of citing the authority of the early Churches in matters of discipline and practice, without any distinct view of the exact weight of that authority. In quoting doctrinal statements we are generally more accurate in our estimate; but it is undeniable, that the practices and discipline of the primitive Churches, are subject to the same kind of check from Scripture, as are their opinions and faith; and are in no instance to be received as if they were matters left altogether to their discretion. The *principles*, although not the specific rules, are given in the New Testament: and this is, perhaps, nearly all that is done in the case of the doctrines themselves. Only the elements, out of which these are to be composed, are furnished by Scripture. So far from being stated in a formal way, some of the abstract terms for these doctrines are not found in the Scriptures; such a statement and enunciation of them being left to the discretion of the Church. So, too, the principles of the Church-establishment were given, and were put in practice for illustration; and the application of these principles was all that was left to the discretion of its uninspired rulers. In short, every Church, in all ages, holds Scripture in its hand, as its warrant for its usages as well as for its doctrines; and had the immediate successors and companions of the apostles, from the very first, corrupted the government and constitution of the Church, *we* should be enabled to condemn them from the New Testament; and to this test it is the duty of all ages to bring them. Their management of those matters which are said to be left indeterminate, has only the authority of an experiment; it is a practical illustration of scriptural principles. Whenever they have been successful in this experiment, it would, indeed, generally be unwise and presumptuous in us to hazard a different mode of attaining the same result; though even here, any deviation is authorized by difference of circumstances; the same principle which guided them being kept in view by us. But, in whatever stage of ecclesiastical history the principle itself shall appear to have been forgotten,—it matters not how far back the practice may be traced,—it has no authority as a precedent. The Bible is our only attested rule; and we must appeal to it with the boldness recommended by the apostle to his converts; and though an angel from heaven preach unto us any other rule than that we have received, let him be accursed.

Gal. i. 8, 9.

This boundary line to the discretionary powers of the Church would be quite clear, supposing the ecclesiastical principles to have

been left only as above considered, in the form of abstract instruction, whether formally enunciated, or certainly deducible from the Scriptures. But far more than this was done. On these very principles the apostles actually formed and regulated societies of Christians; so as to leave them not merely abstractedly propounded, but practically proved. This proceeding, while it lightened the difficulty of the uninspired Church, (especially of those who first received the guidance of it from the apostles, and who most needed it,) proportionably contracted the discretionary powers with which they were invested. If only abstract principles had been left, uninspired authorities would have been justified in regarding solely these, and regulating the means of conformity to them by their own unbiassed judgment. But the apostolical precedents created a new restriction. Rulers of infallible judgment not only had taught the principle, but the precise method by which that principle was best preserved had been practised by them, and set forth, apparently for the guidance of their less enlightened successors.

Was the Church of all ages bound to follow their track without any deviation? If so, where was any room for discretionary power? If not, on what authority was the deviation to be made, and how far was it authorized? Here the most accurate view of the character and object of the Christian's sacred record is necessary, in order to remove all obscurity from the question. That record, as far as the agency of human ministers is its object, is partly historical, partly legislative. The two terms are not, perhaps, quite expressive of the distinction intended; but, by Scripture being partly legislative, is meant, that it is partly concerned in conveying the rules and principles of religion—the revealed will, in short, of God. It is also partly historical; and of the historical portion no inconsiderable share is solely or principally a practical illustration of these rules and principles. History and legislation are indeed both blended; and it is because they are thus connected: but the respective uses of them, as distinct portions of Scripture, are here, as in other questions of a similar nature, very important. When the historical incidents, the *facts* recorded, are recorded as specimens of the fulfilment of God's will, their only authority, as precedents and examples, arises from their conformity to the principle which they illustrate. Now it is conceivable and likely, that a change of circumstances may render a practice inconsistent with such a principle, which originally was most accordant with it, and *vice versâ*. The principle is the fixed point, and the course which has first attained it may become as unsuitable to another who pursues it, as the same line of direction would be for two voyagers who should be steering for the same landmark at different seasons, and with different winds. Still, as in this latter case, the first successful attempt would be, to a certain extent, a guide to those which follow; and this, exactly in proportion to the skill of the forerunner. The

apostles were known to be infallible guides; and those who immediately succeeded them, and all subsequent ages, are quite sure that they must have pursued that which was, under the existing circumstances, the most direct line to their object,—that, circumstanced as Christianity was in their hands, all their regulations were the best possible for preserving the principles of the Church-establishment and government. The uninspired Church was therefore bound to follow them, until any apostolical practice should be found inadequate to accomplish its original purpose. Here commence the discretion and responsibility; the first obligation being to maintain the principle according to the best of their judgment, as the prudent steersman alters his track and deviates from the course marked out in his chart, when wind or tide compel him to the deviation.

Different standards of Apostolical and Uninspired Usage.

And thus we shall be at no loss for the precise difference of authority between the precedents of the apostolical and of the primitive uninspired Church. In matters which admit of appeal to the usage of the apostolical Church, we are sure, not only that the measure was wise, but the very wisest; and, accordingly, the only question is, whether its suitableness has been affected by any change of circumstances. On the other hand, in a similar reference to the uninspired Church of any age, the measure is first of all pronounced wise or unwise—lawful or unlawful, as it conduces or not to the maintenance of the revealed principles of ecclesiastical society. And, supposing the measure under consideration be proved to have been so conducive, still it is not at once certain, as in the former case, that it was the wisest and most judicious measure which the existing circumstances required or admitted. It emanated from fallible wisdom. Accordingly, in canvassing the authority of such a precedent, we are authorized and bound to institute two inquiries;—Was the measure the most accordant with ecclesiastical principles *then?* Is it so *now?* Whereas, in the former appeal to apostolic usage, the only question is, whether it is convenient, now?

Qualification arising from extreme Antiquity.

There is, however, some qualification to be admitted in this general statement, correct as it is in a general view. The qualifying point is this: in usages for which there is no precise rule or precedent in Scripture, but in which we follow the practice of the ancient Church, there is a difference to be made in the authority of our guide, as the usage can be clearly and decidedly traced to uninspired institution or not. If, looking back through the successive generations of Christians, we find it without date or recorded source, it *may* have been of apostolical origin; and the strength of this claim is in proportion to the distance of the first link in the chain of its history,—in short, to its antiquity,—combined with its apparent wisdom and apostolical character. Such a custom, indeed, may have so great a preponderance of probability in favour of its apostolical origin, as to claim from us nearly the same cautious diffidence in

departing from it, which would influence us in canvassing a deviation from the apostolical precedents themselves.

Limits from the Possession of the Scriptures.

Our immediate inquiry, however, and the point to which these remarks have been directed, is not concerning the lawful use of *uninspired precedents* by us, but the lawful use of *inspired precedents* by those who first found themselves deprived of the immediate guidance of inspiration. The Church, it was observed, had several distinct offices to fulfil. It was the trustee of holy writ for mankind; and in this character it was called on, agreeably to the will of God, to exert itself for the preservation, and also for the dispensing, of the deposit. The Church was also the appointed channel of grace; and out of this arose a new demand on its carefulness, to preserve or to provide such forms as should be best adapted for this purpose. From Scripture and from oral instruction it had been taught the great principles by which the apostles had been directed, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to attain these ends; and it had, moreover, witnessed and practised under the apostles the measures which inspired wisdom had directed, for a due conformity to these ordained principles of His society. Still, as the principles were the end, and the practice which formed the apostolical precedents, the means, and, as such, only precedents so far as they were conducive to that end; the Church was left to the exercise of a discretion, which, whether exercised rightly or abused, could not, or ought not, to mislead a succeeding age. Every Christian society, at every period, must, as such, possess the Christian's sacred record; and is, by that, enabled to judge how far others, or how far it has hitherto itself employed that discretionary power, so that the Church should retain its great scriptural marks—Spirituality, Universality, Unity.

This reasoning applied to the Duty of universally circulating the Scriptures.

Thus, considering the Church as fulfilling its office of preserving the Scriptures, and of being the channel of evidence to their authenticity, the limit to its discretionary power, in any given instance, is not hard to be discovered; and we shall scarcely be at a loss to decide on the praise or blame which the apostolical Fathers and their coadjutors deserve on this score from posterity, or on the authority and use of their example. In order to *preserve* the Scriptures, for instance, it would be obviously their duty to promote their general use among Christians, precisely in the form in which they were first deposited as a trust to be preserved. They might see reason, and it would be right for them, to recast the scriptural truths, and to combine and mould them differently in Homilies, Catechisms, Creeds, and Articles; but it would be unlawful for them to *substitute* these uninspired compositions, however perfect, however completely conveying scriptural truth, for the sacred writings themselves. The New Testament was an estate in trust; and the trustees had no authority to dispose of the property, however advantageous the transfer might appear. But, although no doubt could arise on this point; although it is evident, that in order

to preserve the Scriptures, and so to preserve them, that each generation may become a strong evidence to the next of their perpetually admitted authenticity, a very general use of the original Scripture is indispensable; still, a doubt may arise, as to the obligation of circulating these writings, in their original form, among all ranks and descriptions of persons; among those, for instance, whose labours or whose history was not likely to descend from one age to another, and thus to furnish the intended evidence. If such a doubt arose, how would it be determined? Obviously, by observing how far the great foundation principles of the Church would be violated or preserved, as one side or the other was adopted in the question. Looking back to the apostolical course, no historical fact, no precedent would, perhaps, present itself as being precisely a parallel case; but what could not fail to force itself on the attention, would be, an anxiety expressed in the sacred writings and in the ministry of the inspired teachers, to preserve that distinction between the Christian and the Jewish Church which forbade a *gradation* of privileges amongst its members; which maintained the breaking down of the partition walls that formerly separated God's Church into classes, each claiming a different proportion of communion, instruction, and whatever else be comprehended under the term Divine dispensation; which taught that there was one law for all. This reference to the principle of Unity, then, would be sufficient to guide the Church, for the first time, in its distribution of the Scriptures, and would equally suffice to enable any other Church, of any other age, to judge whether it had distributed them rightly or otherwise. No plea, not even an apostolical precedent, (if such a supposition be possible,) would form a ground for withholding, from any portion of the Church, the Scriptures in a language understood by all. This is so, because the principle of unity of dispensation is the fixed mark, by which the apostolical precedents themselves were directed; and any such supposable deviation could only have arisen from extraordinary variation in the means of attaining that end.

Again, considering the Church in another capacity, as the dispenser of scriptural truth, we naturally find it shaping its measures by an attention to those circumstances, which would render, in each age and society, the Scriptures more easily learned, or less liable to be mistaken. These truths being always the same, there would still be much room for discretionary power, in conveying them to children, or to mature minds; to a cultivated, or to a rude people; to a philosopher, or to the vulgar. As errors and heresies arose, a further modification would take place in the mode of teaching truths once perverted; and these would be, according to the exigency, made more prominent, more explicit, and be more definitely and securely worded. Catechisms, Creeds, and Articles, would be the natural result of the Church's efforts to do its duty as dispenser of scriptural truth. As a body, likewise, it would, with the same

To Catechisms, Creeds, Articles,

intent, appoint preachers of the word, and dispose the oral and written eloquence of its ministers to bear in the same direction. For the right management of all this, the uninspired Church would often find no parallel or strict precedent in apostolical history, and would act on its own discretion. But here, again, its discretion would not be quite uncontrolled. It would be bound so to act, as to conform to those very fundamental principles of the Church to which the apostles themselves conformed; nor would its practice, in any such case, be a precedent for after times, unless it could abide this test, nor even then, for we should further calculate on its conformity to the scriptural principles, under all the difference of circumstances between the then and the present condition of the Church, before we admitted it as a lawful precedent.

Preaching.

Nor would it, at all, affect the Divine character of our religion, if it should appear that the Church had, in any one instance, departed from its principles, immediately on losing its inspired and extraordinary superintendence. Even if it were found to be so, this would not affect its claim to a divine origin, much less oblige us to imitate and perpetuate the error. In mere human institutions, it may imply want of wisdom and foresight in the founder, that his work should soon have degenerated, and its object be defeated; but this reasoning is not applicable to the Divine appointments; at least it does not apply to the condition of the Church more than to any other of these appointments. The same difficulty meets us in the history of the progressive corruption of the human race; in the backslidings of God's chosen people, the Jews; and it is what we have reason to look for even in the last dispensation itself, from the prophetic warning of its inspired founders. It is a difficulty which resolves itself into the inexplicable question concerning the existence of evil. The general corruption of the Christian world, at any past period, ought to be considered rather as a presumption that the Church is assisted by God; and this the more, the earlier such corruption occurred. It is so for this reason. When the old world first began to corrupt religion, we know that men plunged deeper and deeper into error. When the Jews began to disobey the law and to practise idolatry, we see plainly from their history that the like fate would have befallen them. And why did it not? *Because God continually interposed.* What, then, but a corresponding, though insensible, Divine guardianship can account for that which has taken place in the Church of Christ—*reformation?* That it should have occurred otherwise, is contrary to all that has ever happened, according to the religious history of mankind in every age.

Early corruption of Practice by the Church not inconsistent with God's other dispensations,

an argument for the presence of His constant Guardianship.

To the rulers of the Church, viewed in its sacramental character, as the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the medium of Divine grace, a discretionary power was likewise left, and likewise subject to a limitation which could never be fairly misunderstood. For the attainment of this object, certain forms and ceremonies were requi-

Discretionary power of the Church as to Ceremonies.

site; in which Christians, as such, join, and through which, as members of a community, grace was to be imparted. To Christians, as a society, the promise of the Spirit was made; and, accordingly, to them, as a society, it was to be conveyed. The apostles had begun and established precedents, which, of course, would be naturally adopted by their uninspired successors. But still, as these were only the formal means of grace, and not the blessing itself, it was equally to be expected that the Church should assume a discretionary power, whenever the means established became impracticable or clearly unsuitable, and either substitute others, or abolish such as existed, without appointing any in their stead. At the same time, so great a license would leave the Church liable to be disturbed by the caprice of mankind; and it was accordingly necessary that the boundary of its liberty should be strongly marked. The obvious line is this: the appointments made by the apostles had a twofold object, some were designed to convey extraordinary gifts, some ordinary. Whatever form was instituted by them for conveying extraordinary gifts, was evidently not to be continued by the uninspired Church; at least not with the original purpose in view. As to the other appointments, it might seem at first that the apostolical precedents were literally binding on all ages: but this cannot have been intended; and for this reason, that the greater portion of the apostolical practices have been transmitted to us, not on apostolical authority, but on the authority of the uninspired Church: which has handed them down with an uncertain mixture of its own appointments. How are we to know the enactments of the inspired rulers from those of the uninspired? and, if there be no certain clue, we must either bring down the authority of apostolical usage to that of the uninspired Church, or raise that of the uninspired Church to that of the apostolical. Now the former is, doubtless, what was, to a certain extent, intended by the apostles themselves, as will appear from a line of distinction by which they have carefully partitioned off such of their appointments as are designed to be perpetual, from such as are left to share the possibility of change with the institutions of uninspired wisdom. If, then, we look to the account of the Christian usages contained in Scripture, nothing can be more unquestionable, than that while some are specified, others are passed over in silence. It is not even left so as to make us imagine that those mentioned may be all; but, while some are noted specifically, the establishment of others is implied, without the particular mode of observance being given. Thus, we are equally sure from Scripture, that Christian ministers were ordained by a certain form, and that Christians assembled in prayer; but while the precise process of laying on of hands is mentioned in the former institution, no account is given of the precise method of Church Service, or even of any regular forms of prayer, beyond the Lord's Prayer. Even the record of the Ordination Service itself admits of the same distinction. It is quite

How far limited.

as certain that some prayer was used, as that some outward form accompanied the prayer; but the form is specified, the prayer left unrecorded. What, now, is the obvious interpretation of the holy Dispenser's meaning in this mode of record? Clearly it is, that the apostles regulated under his guidance the forms and practices of the Church, so as was best calculated to convey grace to the Church at that time. At the same time, part of its institutions were of a nature, which, although formal, would never require a change; and these therefore were left recorded in the Scriptures to mark the distinction of character. The others were not, indeed, to be capriciously abandoned, not at all, except when there should be manifest cause for so doing; but as such a case was supposable, these were left to mingle with the uninspired precedents, the claims of which, as precedents, would be increased by this uncertain admixture, and the authority of the whole rendered so far binding, and so far subject to the discretion of the Church. They might not be altered, unless sufficient grounds should appear; but the settling of this point was left to the discretion of the Church; and this discretion, again, was subject to the check above described, as arising out of the well-defined characteristics of the Church.

Among the methods of communicating Divine grace, the Sacraments, of course, are distinguished as having been the appointment of our blessed Lord himself. As far, however, as their permanent claim extends, in common with that of other institutions, to be celebrated according to all the form found in Scripture, the foregoing general remarks are sufficient. It will be time enough to enter more fully into this particular branch of inquiry, when we arrive at it in the detail of the practices of the primitive Church; for the better estimate of which, this previous view has been taken.

CHAPTER III.

From A.D. 100—167.

How far the Design of the Church's Inspired Founders was Preserved and Followed up by the First Uninspired Churches or their Rulers.

Of the three leading questions, whereby it was proposed to elicit a view of the primitive Church, two have been briefly, but, perhaps, sufficiently discussed. We have now seen, first, what parts of the apostles' ministry were intended for the *foundation* of Christianity, and next, what parts were intended for its *preservation* and *application*. The third inquiry remains, How far was the design of the Church's inspired founders preserved and followed up by the first uninspired Churches or their rulers?

As this can only be satisfactorily answered by a detail of the proceedings of the primitive Church—so far, at least, as those proceedings are known to us—little more will be requisite in most instances, than to observe such an arrangement of these historical facts, as shall connect them with the general view to which they refer. This arrangement will be formed in reference to the view already taken of the character of the Church and its several offices; so as that each point of ecclesiastical history necessary for our purpose may be brought under one of these four heads.

I. How the first uninspired Church fulfilled its office of preserving and attesting the *sacred record*.

II. How the first uninspired Church fulfilled its office of *dispensing* the truths contained in this sacred record.

III. How the first uninspired Church fulfilled its office of *conveyng Divine grace*.

IV. How far its *discipline*, or method of self-preservation, was conformable to the design of its inspired founders.

I. HOW THE FIRST UNINSPIRED CHURCH FULFILLED ITS OFFICE OF PRESERVING AND ATTESTING THE SACRED RECORD.

Preservation of the Sacred Record.

One of the preceding remarks on the uses of the Church was, that it was designed to be to the sacred record, what an inspired order of ministers had been to the unrecorded revelation. Revelation was

withdrawn, and Scripture left in its room. As revelation had been secured against misrepresentation or curtailment, by Divine suggestion and correction, and also attested to be Divine by signs, wonders, and spiritual gifts; so, in the establishment of the Church, we see a corresponding provision made for the preservation of the Scriptures, and also for a perpetual testimony to their authority. Among the means whereby this was effected, the principal have been:—

1. THE PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

By Public Reading.

It is not to the utility of this practice as a mode of promulgating the Divine truths of the Gospel, that I am now alluding; but to its effect in preventing the loss or corruption of the sacred record itself, in any, or in all societies of Christians; and also in keeping up a perpetual testimony to its Divine authority, of which evidence the Church was the especial and appointed vehicle. The value of the practice, in this point of view, can only be justly estimated by recollecting, how much more difficult it was to keep up a chain of evidence to the identity of a record such as this, (in which the smallest doubt was likely to vitiate the claim of the whole,) before reading was common; and still more, before the art of printing was invented. The language of Scripture continually sounding in the ears of Christians of all classes, would leave no interval for the introduction of false records. The Church would thus keep up a familiarity with its Divine Guide, which might be compared to that which holy men of old, probably, acquired with any particular mode of Divine communication from the frequency of their revelations. They learned to know the voice of the Lord God, and could not be imposed on by a lying spirit. And so, doubtless, it was intended, that the written word of God should be made continually to speak to his Church, in order that his Church never may be subject to delusion from the cunning devices of impostors.

Its value.

That the primitive Church contemplated this purpose, in its careful observance of the usage, may be questioned. It is, indeed, probable, that its main, perhaps its sole, object was the instruction thereby afforded. But, granting this to be so, neither in this nor in any other of the Christian practices, was it requisite that the whole or the main design of the Church's Divine Ruler should have been comprehended by his obedient ministers. The apostles themselves, perhaps, saw not the full operation and progressive results of their own plans; and we, at this moment, may be cherishing among the rites and ordinances of Christianity some, the full effect of which it may be reserved to future times, to a period beyond this world, to develop.

Early customs attendant upon it.

As far back as we can trace any accounts, incidental or direct, of the service of the primitive Church, the public reading of the Scriptures is recognised. Even the minute arrangement of particular portions for particular seasons was observed. Occasional deviations,

too, from the general practice of the Christian world are known to us. As, for instance, that for the first four hundred years, the Romish Church confined itself to the public reading of the New Testament, to the exclusion of the Old.[17] That in the observance of this duty, something more was felt than a desire for instruction,—some respect and veneration, in short, for the deposit intrusted to their care, and an anxious wish to attach to its preservation every solemn circumstance, may be inferred from the custom which long generally prevailed, of rising when the Gospel was read;[18] and also from the words with which its reading was prefaced, "Thus saith the Lord." It denoted a feeling that Scripture was the appointed substitute for what had in times past taken place, "God speaking in divers manners;" and a scrupulous respect for it, as for the new Shechinah.

Translation of the Scriptures.

The object of this custom would clearly have been defeated, had the Scriptures been read in a tongue unknown to the congregation. Without any direct testimony therefore to this point, we should reasonably take it for granted, that the Word of God was read in a language "understanded of the people." But, it is clearly ascertained, that for the convenience of those Churches wherein the original of the Scriptures was unintelligible, translations were early made and used;[19] as early, perhaps, as the close of the first century; and what is, perhaps, no less conclusive than direct testimony, is the inference to be deduced from the language of the apostolical Fathers in their Epistles to different Churches. In these, the writers are addressing themselves to each Church as a body, and appealing continually to the words of the Gospels and Epistles, as to documents with which those addressed are supposed to be familiar. Now as the greater portion of every Church cannot be imagined, at that time certainly, to have had copies of the Scriptures in their hands, or even to have learned to read, this habitual familiarity with its texts could only have been acquired by the public reading of them.[20] Clement, accordingly, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, quotes

[17] Strabo, de Reb. Eccl. C. 12, cited by Stillingfleet, in his Orig. Britan. C. IX.

[18] Constitutions, Lib. II. C. 57. See also Chrysostom, Hom. 1, in Matth. Sozomen (Lib. VII. C. 19) notices it as a peculiarity of the Alexandrian Church, that the bishop did not conform to this custom. St. Jerome records a custom in the Eastern Churches, of ushering in the Gospel with lighted candles. Cave, however, doubts the primitive antiquity of this practice; and there is certainly no reason to suppose that it was universal. See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book XIV. C. III. Sec. 11.

[19] See the ancient testimonies cited in Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book XIII. C. IV. Justin Martyr is the earliest.

[20] It appears from Eusebius, that in the age of Constantine there was a custom established, of leaving in each Church one or more copies of the Bible for the use of those who could read, and who might wish to refer to it. The emperor himself is said to have been in the habit of using them, (see Eusebius, Vit. Constant. Lib. IV. C. 17.) There is extant a distich of Paulinus, which was written by him on the walls of the *Secretarium* of the church of Nola, in allusion to this custom:—

"Si quem sancta tenet meditandi in Lege voluntas
Hic poterit residens sacris intendere libris."

Paulin. Epist. ad Severum, cited by Bingham, Eccles. Antiq. B. VIII. C. VI.

St. Luke's Gospel thus—"*Remember* the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, Wo to that man by whom offences come," &c. So, too, Polycarp to the Philippians,[21] "*Remembering* what the Lord taught us," which is followed by another exact citation from St. Luke's Gospel, implying that their readers were familiar with the Scripture itself.

2. QUOTATIONS FROM, AND ALLUSIONS TO, THE SCRIPTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, IN THE WRITINGS OF THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

By citations.

In this very custom of quoting the words of Scripture in all their writings, we may perceive another mode in which the Church and its rulers became the vehicle of evidence to the sacred record, and the means of preserving it pure. When Clement or Ignatius cites a passage of St. Luke or St. Paul as inspired, the citation serves at once the purpose of preserving to posterity their testimony to the inspired character of the writings, and of enabling us to identify those writings with such as have been transmitted to us as Scripture. In no respect is the testimonial office of the Church more apparent than in this. During a period of nearly eighteen hundred years, the Church of one age has been thus passing on the memorial of its own conviction and satisfaction to another. Like a chain of heralds stationed over a wide extent of country, for the purpose of transmitting some great and urgent tidings; one generation has written, what may be called, the telegraph of its own conviction to the next; and thus it has passed on even unto us. Let no one, therefore, blame the zeal which incites numbers still to tread the same ground with their predecessors; to write on the same topics on which *they* have written, even without the design of superseding their labours, or the ambition of rivalling them. He who has left to the world a statement of his belief in any Gospel truth, and in the authenticity of the record which preserves it, if his writings but remain to another generation, will have borne a part in one of the most important offices of that great society to which he belongs. His writings will have served to swell the voice that speaks out, according to the appointment of Providence, from one station of time unto another; and which must continue to be heard till time shall be no more.

Out of those writings of the apostolical Fathers which are commonly selected as genuine, the following quotations from, and allusions to, the New Testament Scriptures, may serve to show in what way those writings attest the genuineness of our Canon; and a reference to the context, in each instance, will enable us farther to judge how far these Fathers applied the Scriptures, according to what we consider to be their true import and intent.[22]

[21] Chap. ii.

[22] These passages are from Archbishop Wake's version. Wherever it fails to give the full sense of the original, the deviation is noticed at the bottom of the page.

CLEMENT.

Citations by Clement.

First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xiii. "Remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, which he spake concerning equity[23] and long-suffering, saying, Be ye merciful, and ye shall obtain mercy: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: as ye do, so shall it be done unto you: as ye give, so shall it be given unto you: as ye judge, so shall ye be judged: as ye are kind to others, so shall God be kind to you: with what measure ye mete, with the same shall it be measured to you again." Compare Matt. vii. 1, 6, and Luke vi. 36—38.

Chap. xxxvi. "This is the way, beloved, in which we may find our Saviour, even Jesus Christ, the High Priest of all our offerings. By him would God have us to taste the knowledge of immortality, who being the brightness of his glory,[24] is by so much greater than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For so it is written. Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But to his Son,[25] thus saith the Lord: Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession. And, again, he saith unto him: Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Compare Hebrews i. 3—13.

Chap. xxxvii. "Let us for example take our body; the head without the feet is nothing, neither the feet without the head. And even the smallest members of our body are yet both necessary and useful to the whole body. But all conspire together, and are subject to one common use,[26] namely, the preservation of the whole body." Compare St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xii.

Chap. xlvi. "Why do we rend and tear in pieces the members of Christ; and raise seditions against our own body?—Are we come to such a height of madness, as to forget that we are members one of another? Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, Wo to that man by whom offences come![27] It were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should have offended one of my elect. It were better for him that a millstone should be tied about his neck, and he should be cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones." Compare Matt. xviii. 6; Mark ix. 42; Luke xvii. 1, 2.

[23] Ἐπιείκειαν, *meekness*, *forbearance*, *mercy*. Even δικαιοσύνη was so applied, as in 2 Cor. ix. 9: Ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. In Matt. i. 19: Ἰωσὴφ δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς δίκαιος ὤν, should be rendered, "*Joseph her husband*, *being* a mild or merciful *man*."

[24] Ἀπαύγασμα τῆς μεγαλωσύνης αὐτοῦ, "the brightness of his majesty;" the word μεγαλωσύνης occurring in the same verse, was very naturally substituted by one quoting, as Clement probably did, from memory. See ver. 3, in the passage alluded to.

[25] Ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ Υἱῷ αὐτοῦ, "in reference to his Son."

[26] Ὑποταγῇ μιᾷ χρῆται εἰς τὸ σώζεσθαι ὅλον, "all practise submission, that they may be preserved as a whole."

[27] The latter part of the sentence is not in the original.

Chap. xlvii. "Take the Epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle into your hands. What was it that he wrote to you at his first preaching the Gospel among you?[28] Verily, he did by the Spirit admonish you, concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because that even then ye had begun to fall into parties and factions among yourselves." Compare St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, especially chap. i. 11, 12.

Chap. xlix. "Charity covers the[29] multitude of sins: charity endures all things, is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing base and sordid[30] in charity. Charity lifts not itself up above others; admits of no divisions; is not seditious; but does all things in peace and concord. By charity were all the elect of God made perfect."[31] Compare St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xiii. 7, &c.

IGNATIUS.

By Ignatius.

Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. xii. "You are the companions of Paul in the mysteries[32] of the Gospel, the holy, the martyr, the deservedly most happy Paul, who throughout all his Epistle makes mention of you in Christ Jesus." Compare St. Paul to the Ephesians, especially chap. iii. 3—9.

Same Epistle, chap. xviii. "The doctrine of the cross is a scandal[33] to unbelievers, but to us is salvation and life eternal. Where is the wise man? Where is the boasting of those who are called wise?" Compare First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. i. 18—20.

Epistle to the Magnesians, chap. x. "Lay aside therefore the old, and sour, and evil leaven, and be ye changed into the new leaven, which is Jesus Christ." Compare St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. v. 7, 8.

Smyrnæans, chap. i. "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who truly was of the race of David according to the flesh, but the Son of God according to the will and power of God." Compare Epistle to the Romans, chap. i. 3, 4.

Epistle to Polycarp, chap. v. "Exhort my brethren, that they love their wives, even as the Lord the Church." Compare St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. v. 25.

[28] Ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Compare Phil. iv. 15, Οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς Φιλιππήσιοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν, κ. τ. λ. Ecclesiastical writers use the phrase in the same sense.

[29] The article is wanting, as is the case in the original expression of St. Peter, from whom it was, doubtless, borrowed.

[30] Οὐδὲν βάναυσον ἐν ἀγάπῃ, οὐδὲν ὑπερήφανον. "Display" would have expressed the meaning of βάναυσον more exactly. Aristotle, in his Ethics, makes βαναυσία the *excess* of μεγαλοπρέπεια, see Lib. II. C. 7. and Lib. IV. C. 2. Ὁ βάναυσος, τῷ παρὰ τὸ δέον ἀναλίσκειν, ὑπερβάλλει, ἐν γὰρ τοῖς μικροῖς τῶν δαπανήματων πολλὰ ἀναλίσκει, καὶ λαμπρύνεται παρὰ μέλος. Οἷον ἐρανιστὰς γαμικοὺς ἑστιῶν. Clement, doubtless, intended to express St. Paul's ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται.

[31] Ἐτελειώθησαν, "have been made perfect."

[32] Συμμύσται, persons initiated in the same mysteries. It is an allusion to the apostle's language, concerning the call of the Gentiles, which he speaks of as "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest." See more especially Eph. iii. 3—9

[33] "A stumbling-block."

POLYCARP.

By Polycarp. *Epistle to the Philippians*, chap. iii. "Paul, who being himself in person with those who then lived,[34] did with all exactness and soundness teach the word of truth, and being gone from you, wrote an Epistle[35] to you; into which, if you look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith, which has been delivered unto you." Compare St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians.

Chap. i. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." Compare Acts ii. 24.

Chap. ii. "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind,[36] serve the Lord with fear." Compare St. Peter, 1 Epistle, i. 13.

Ibid. "Remembering what the Lord has taught us, saying, 'Judge not, and ye shall not be judged;[37] forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.' Be ye merciful, and ye shall obtain mercy:[38] for[39] with the same measure that you mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. And again, 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of God.'" Compare Luke vi. 36—38; Matt. v. 3; vii. 1, 2.

Chap. iv. "The love of money is the root of all evil.[40] Knowing, therefore, that as we brought nothing into the world, so neither may we carry any thing out," &c. Compare St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, vi. 7, 10.

Chap. v. "Every such lust[41] warreth against the spirit; and neither fornicators, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Compare First Epistle of St. Peter, ii. 11; and 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

Chap. vi. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall every one give an account of himself." Compare St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, xiv. 10, 12.

Chap. vii. "Whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he is antichrist." Compare 1 St. John iv. 3.

Chap. viii. "Jesus Christ, who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree; who did no sin, neither was guile found in

34 Ἐν ὑμῖν omitted; "those of you who then lived" would have expressed it.

35 Ἐπιστολάς. Lardner understands him to speak of the Epistles to the Thessalonians, as well as that to the Philippians, (see Credibil. B. I. C. 6.) Cotelerius, in his note on the word, cites Eusebius and other authorities, to show that the word is sometimes used in the plural for a single Epistle. This is partly true. The plural of ἐπιστολὴ may be so used as *not to imply* more letters than one, but not, like the Latin *literæ*, to express one letter. The translation therefore is not quite correct. It should be, "Paul, &c. wrote to you, and, if you will refer to *what he wrote*." The circumstance of its being one or more Epistles, is not intended to be expressed.

36 "Of your mind," not in the original.

37 Ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε, in order that ye may not be judged.

38 Ἵνα ἐλεηθῆτε, in order that ye may obtain mercy.

39 "For," not in the original.

40 Πάντων χαλεπῶν, "all difficulties." Polycarp must have made the quotation with that expression of our Saviour in his mind, "How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." "It is *easier* for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." —Luke xviii. 24, 25.

41 Πᾶσα ἐπιθυμία, "every lust."

his mouth; but suffered all for us, that we might live through him." Compare 1 Peter ii. 22—24.

Chap. ix. "Keep yourselves from all evil. For he that in these things cannot govern himself, how shall he be able to prescribe *them*[42] to another. If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be followed with idolatry, and be judged as if he were a Gentile. But who of you are ignorant of God? Do we not know, that 'the saints shall judge the world,' as Paul teaches? But I have neither perceived nor heard any thing of this kind in you, among whom the blessed Paul laboured, and who are named in the beginning of that Epistle; for the glories of you, in all the Churches who then only knew God." Compare St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians, v. 22; Eph. v. 5; Coloss. ii. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 2; Phil. i.

Chap. xii. "I trust that ye are well exercised in the holy Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you;[43] but at present, it is not granted unto me to practise that which is written.[44] 'Be angry, and sin not;' and again, 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.'" Compare Eph. iv. 26.

It has been observed by some, that although, in most of these and the like instances, the citations are sufficiently correct to preclude all doubt of their being taken from the very parts of Scripture to which they are assigned; yet, that in a few, the meaning, and

These citations sometimes differ from the precise words of Scripture.

[42] *Hoc*, "this," the rule, namely, which follows, "If a man does not," &c. agreeably to our Lord's language, as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke, "How canst thou *say to thy brother*, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" —Luke vi. 42; Matt. vii. 4.

[43] (*Et nihil vos latet.*) The translator seems to have read *latere*.

[44] The sentence, as it stands in the original, is obscure. *Mihi autem non concessum est, modo*, seems rather to refer to the assiduous study of the Scriptures, which he had been recommending in the words immediately preceding. *Ut his Scripturis dictum est*, begins another period, and the quotations denoted are those which follow, "Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath." This passage so arranged, (and it is the most natural arrangement,) proves two things; first, that the New Testament was appealed to as *Scripture*,—as a *written record*,—by Polycarp; secondly, that it comprehended already, beyond the sacred narratives, at least the Epistle to the Ephesians. For, although it may be said that the former part of the quotation, "Be ye angry, and sin not," may have been cited from the book of Psalms immediately; yet the other words are only to be found in the New Testament; and being there coupled with the former, there can be no doubt that the whole was intended as a quotation from the same passage. Ignatius, even, makes more than one apparent allusion to a collection of the New Testament Scriptures, *e.g. Ep. ad Philad.* Sec. 8; "Certain persons declared in my hearing, 'I believe nothing which may not be found in the ancients (or the archives.'*) On my saying, 'It is written there,' they answered, 'The point is proved.'" Again, in the same Epistle, Sec. 5, we read, "Fleeing to the Gospel as to the body of Christ, and to the apostles, as to the presbytery of the Church. At the same time, let us respect the prophets, for they announced to mankind, that we were to believe in the Gospel and in him, and to expect him." Now as the writer evidently meant by "the prophets," the writings of the prophets, (under which denomination he might have comprehended all the inspired writings of the Old Testament,) the most natural interpretation of the terms "Gospel," and "apostles," is "the recorded Gospel," and "the *writings* of the apostles."

* There are two readings, ἀρχαίοις and ἀρχείοις.

not the exact words is given: and, again, that quotations are made, which it is difficult to accommodate to any part of the Canon. This is noticed, because it is sometimes urged as detracting from the authority of the Fathers, in the present application of their writings. There is, in truth, however, something highly natural in this inaccurate mode of quotation used by the apostolical Fathers. They were, it should be remembered, instructed, not from Scripture, not from a record, but from the oral teaching of the apostles themselves. The very words in which they first heard many of the Gospel truths, which they afterwards impressed on their congregations, must, beyond a doubt, have been in many instances different from the expressions of the record. To them, accordingly, these would be most natural, and would often, in the earnestness of their exhortation, be inadvertently adopted in preference to the scriptural language. This is not only possible, but what, under their circumstances, we should expect to take place: and there is therefore no occasion for attempting to solve the difficulty, either by supposing any portion of the holy Testament to have perished under the Church's keeping; or by attributing to these writers the habit of occasionally confounding the uninspired with the inspired works of that age.

Reason for the difference.

COLLECTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

Preservation of the written Record by the collection of its several parts.

There is yet another point of view, in which the Church may be regarded as a vehicle for preserving the record of revelation, and also for attesting it, in collecting, namely, the several inspired writings into one body. It has already been pointed out, that of the two distinct kinds of writing of which the New Testament is composed, each has its proper use, and reference to the other. The narrative, separated from the Epistles, would be like the testimonial character of an apostle disjoined from the ministry of the Spirit. The history of the facts of the Gospel-scheme required an exposition of their import; and this exposition, again, would have been useless without the history. To preserve, therefore, the record of revelation pure and perfect, it was necessary, that, although composed of portions, which could only be gradually collected and put together, it should be so combined and so preserved as one. At what time this collection was completed, cannot be certainly ascertained, although there is every reason to think that it was not later than the middle of the second century; and, consequently, before the decease of all the apostolical Fathers. That it was begun, even before the death of St. John, is more certainly inferred; and, probably, from his sanction to the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the addition of his own to the number, we may date the commencement of this important work.[45] That the feeling with

Probable time of this collection.

[45] See p. 175.

which it was undertaken has never ceased to influence all the Church, may, perhaps, be not unfairly presumed from the scruple which still exists, against publishing separately the writings of the New Testament. The Revelations of St. John is, perhaps, the only book that has been commonly edited apart; and the peculiar character of that work may sufficiently account for its being made an exception. With regard to the rest, it would, doubtless, somewhat offend and startle Christians, to see the *Works* of St. Paul, or St. Luke, or St. John, generally printed and circulated apart from the venerable body of Scriptures, in connexion with which it is that each is most valuable.

Reasons for the imperfection of many MSS.

Nor is this view at all inconsistent with the fact, that so many of the manuscript copies of the New Testament contain only the Gospels, or the Gospels and the Acts. The collection of the whole volume must have been gradual, and the New Testament of every Church at one period imperfect,—in the earliest times containing generally no more than the supposed original collection, that of the Gospels. Now, although the ancient catalogues and the assertions of the Fathers prove, that these alone did not constitute the holy book of any Church; still, the original imperfect Testaments would be preserved, and the copiers would continue to transcribe them as they were. It may, too, have arisen from some arrangement respecting the reading of the Lessons, with a view to which a divided copy would have been convenient. Such a convenience appears, certainly, to have given rise to those MSS. which are called *Lectionaries*, from the circumstance of their containing the Scriptures in detached Lessons, as they were appointed to be read in the public services.

Disputes concerning the Canon of Scripture.

But if this has been the prevailing tone of feeling in the Church of all ages, how is it, it may be asked, that the records of the Church should leave any grounds for the disputes, which have existed among later Christians, concerning the extent of the Canon?

Probability that these did not occur in the Primitive Church.

Granting that the labours of the learned have been successful in ejecting many spurious writings from their assumed place in the New Testament,[46] and in establishing others, the claims of which were doubtful; still, does not this very circumstance denote greater carelessness in the primitive Church, than the foregoing view supposes?

Contradictory statements certainly do exist: and yet the general tone and manner in which all these statements are delivered, (independently of any explanation from other parts of the same author's writings,) leave a strong impression on the inquirer's mind, that the great Christian body was originally unanimous in its decision. Viewing the collected evidence, or even the separate portions of it, it is impossible not to feel, that the authors are, for the most part,

[46] See Jones's Canon of the New Testament.

recording, not their individual opinions alone, but the sense and voice of Christians generally. This leads us at once to suspect, that these contradictions are apparent and not real; and requiring only a more complete view of the circumstances attending the formation of the Canon, in order to be explained and reconciled. In the absence of direct historical information, recourse must be had, not indeed to mere conjecture, but to the most probable opinion which can be founded on the nature of the case.

Examined.

Whatever test was originally applied, to separate the true from the counterfeit Scriptures, there can be no question as to the object of the investigation, *viz.*, Whether a work, claiming to be Scripture, was, or was not, inspired. Assuming this, then, as the ultimate aim of all the inquiries which could have taken place, let us consider what would be the natural and necessary steps by which men would advance to their conclusion.

A work is circulated, as the production of St. Paul or St. Barnabas. Obviously, the first question would be, Is he really the author? It is immaterial to the argument at present, by what process of proof the conclusion might be gained,—whether by tradition, the characters of the MSS.,[47] or any combination of external and internal evidence. According as it was found to be so or not, the work would thus far be pronounced genuine or spurious.

In either case, the inquiry would not rest here. Supposing the true author to have been ascertained, before an infallible authority could be conceded to his work, it would be requisite further to know that he was inspired to write it. Here, then, would be a new line of inquiry, and a new conclusion to be sought.

On the other hand, the circumstance of the work having been falsely ascribed to St. Paul or St. Barnabas, would be no conclusive evidence against its scriptural character. Its author might accidentally, or even designedly, have remained unknown; and still, if satisfactory evidence could be obtained, that the apostles, or other competent[48] judges, had pronounced it inspired, its scriptural character would stand precisely on the same footing, as if the work had been traced to an author known to be inspired.[49] Yet, in one sense, such a writing would be spurious. It would be genuine, considered with reference to the Canon, but spurious considered with reference to its authorship. Thus there would exist two principles of classification, little likely to interfere and create any confusion in the minds of those to whom all the circumstances of the investigation were familiar; but for that very reason, the less carefully distinguished in their statements. The terms "spurious," and "genuine,"

[47] The autograph of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, for instance, might have been recognised by the peculiarity alluded to in chap. vi. 11.

[48] *I.E.* rendered competent by extraordinary endowments of the Spirit.

[49] The Epistle to the Hebrews might have been so circumstanced for a time; the prejudice of the Jewish converts generally against the author, being an obvious reason why his name should not be at first attached to it.

"acknowledged," and "doubted," would be often applied indiscriminately to both cases, to the uncanonical, and to the misappropriated; and this, without any surmise of the misapprehension and perplexity which might arise in after ages. To him who wrote it, especially in the case of a casual remark, such a latitude of expression would seem determinate enough, because it would be so at the time in which it was written; however obscure and unsatisfactory it might become in the lapse of a few centuries, or even in a much shorter period.

Pursuing the same course of inquiry, we shall find the probability increasing, that this has sometimes been the case. Let it, then, have been satisfactorily made out, that the work in question was the production of an inspired author; and, further, let that author have been certainly ascertained; a scruple might still exist as to its purity—its entire freedom, not from corruption merely, but from the liability to be corrupted. Other writings, so situated, might retain a value, diminished only in proportion to the injury they have met with from the hands through which they have been transmitted; but, grant any alteration to have taken place in an inspired work, since it received the sanction of inspiration; grant that the point be even uncertain; and all its value as Scripture,—as an infallible guide,—is destroyed. Ninety-nine parts out of the hundred may be assuredly of Divine origin, but if the spurious particle be so blended with it, as to be inseparable—if it be impossible to point out where the additions have been made, the whole is in point of authority no more than equivalent to a counterfeit throughout. For what security would there be, in any given instance, that it was not the fallible judgment of men, and of designing men, too, to which the appeal was made? At the same time, such a work would be respected and used by the Church with the necessary cautions; and might thus be handed down to posterity, described in unguarded phraseology, as genuine and yet spurious, acknowledged and yet doubted,—as "genuine" and "undoubted," because it assuredly was the production of the reputed author; as "spurious" and "doubted," because containing, or likely to contain, an admixture of spurious ingredients. It would, in short, be spoken of in the language which we hear applied to the original of a great artist; the value of which, as such, has been destroyed, and its very title to originality brought in question, by the touches of some meaner hand.

Portions of the New Testament missing in some MSS.

It is well known, that the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Second Epistle of St. James, the Second of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, that of Jude, and the Revelations, are not always found in the old manuscript copies of the New Testament; nor are their names invariably recorded in the catalogues of the old writers. Various epithets, also, and expressions denoting hesitation or rejection, are occasionally applied to them. Nevertheless, no candid

Proofs of their genuineness.

inquirer doubts that they are all Scripture, and that they were from the earliest times so considered. First, because in almost all, if not in every authority, which furnishes the doubtful expression, or makes the suspicious omission, some statement is found incompatible with the notion, that the author had rejected the piece on the score of its being uninspired. Take, *e.g.* the most ancient catalogue of the Scriptures now extant, that of Origen.[50] In this, no mention is made of the Epistles of James and Jude; although in other parts of his writings their authority is acknowledged. Again, Jerome's[51] catalogue contains expressions of doubt, respecting the Epistle to the Hebrews; yet there are passages[52] from the same author, which prove indisputably, that he made use of it as Scripture. In these and the like instances, it is impossible not to attribute the apparent inconsistency to some unrecorded circumstances, attending the settlement of the Canon, such as have been here suggested.

Secondly, reasonable and satisfactory as this method of interpretation is, (for it is like a cross-examination of an author respecting his evidence,) it is not, and never was, be it remembered, the only clue for distinguishing the true Scripture from the false, whenever the two have been confounded in the same doubtful testimony. By comparing such writings with the great body of the New Testament, of which no doubt of any kind was ever expressed, we may safely pronounce them inspired or not, according to their agreement or disagreement with these. But it is worthy of notice, that this test is only applicable to a work which has some strong presumption in its favour derived from other sources. If otherwise applied, it is, in fact, no test, no medium of proof at all. Any orthodox publication of the present day, for instance, must, as orthodox, answer to it; nor would it be supposed from that coincidence to derive any title to independent authority. Not that this kind of evidence is the less forcible on that account, in any instance wherein its use is admissible. It, in fact, is one, and perhaps the principal one, of a class of scriptural proofs, which change their very nature by being combined with others; and may be compared to those substances, which require a chemical union with others of a different class, in order to elicit their most striking properties.

Methods resorted to for the original settlement of the Canon.

Although it does not enter into my plan to investigate the *proofs* made use of in the first settlement of the Canon; that this kind of evidence must have been one of the chief, by which the judgment of the Church was determined, may be naturally concluded, both

[50] Origen, Comment. in Matt. apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. Lib. VI. C. 25. Origen, Exposit. in Joann. Lib. V. apud Euseb. ibid.

[51] Jerome, Epist. ad Paulin. de Stud. Script.

[52] *E.G.* in Epist. ad Sabinianum lapsum, where he quotes Heb. vii. 8; and in his Commentary on the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah, where he speaks of the "heavenly Jerusalem" as the expression of an apostle; not to mention his paraphrase or commentary on the Epistle itself.

from the nature of the subject, and from the notices which are left us of such proofs being resorted to, by Eusebius and others.

Even in the days of the apostles and inspired teachers, such a rule we know was insisted on by St. Paul; "Though *we*," (writes he to the Galatians,) "or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that you have received, let him be accursed." Gal. i. 8, 9.

The antecedent claims, which would induce them to bring any writing to this test, would be the evidence of particular churches, in which the writing had been deposited; the autography of the MSS. in some cases furnishing particular signs, such as may be supposed to have been the case with the original copy of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and the traditional account of its contents, or of any circumstances connected with it. Gal. vi. 11. The seal and confirmation of its authenticity would be its agreement with such scriptural doctrine as was contained in those books which were so widely circulated, and so clearly sanctioned, as to furnish the basis of a standard for Scripture. One work settled, became a measure for others, and Scripture was made the test of Scripture. The sacred volume thus formed, becomes the depository of a power hardly less effectual than that which the inspired Church possessed of trying spirits; and is our unfailing security against the forgeries of distant ages, and the pretended revelations of later times.

CHAPTER IV.

How the First Uninspired Church Fulfilled its Office of DISPENSING the Truths Contained in the Sacred Record.

To the apostles a revelation had been given, which on their removal was supplied by a sacred record. The apostles had been commissioned and empowered to preserve that revelation pure and perfect, by the extraordinary suggestions and corrections of the Holy Spirit; and also to attest it by miracles and miraculous endowments. The Church, as has been shown, was qualified to fulfil the same purposes with regard to the sacred record. But, then, the apostles were not only commissioned and empowered to preserve their revelation entire and uncorrupted, and to furnish evidence to its Divine character; they had a further duty to perform; that, namely, of *dispensing* the truths it contained—of "rightly dividing the word of truth,"[53] as it is expressed by one of them. For this portion of their ministry, likewise, they received from our Lord himself an assurance of extraordinary assistance ever at hand;[54] which the narrative of that ministry clearly shows to have been fulfilled. The sacred record required, of course, a corresponding dispenser; and the Church was accordingly so shaped and modelled, as to assume that character. In what manner it discharged this portion of its duty, on the first ceasing of Divine interposition, is the point of inquiry at which we are now arrived. The measures adopted will be considered briefly and separately; and first, among these, may be noticed the perpetuation of a clerical order, as distinct from the laity, in every Church.

I. MINISTERS OF DIFFERENT ORDERS.

Christian Ministers considered as Dispensers of the Gospel.

In sacred history, we find the apostles, and others duly appointed, exclusively officiating in a course of ministerial duties; and, if it be admitted, that these, or many of these offices, were designed to be

[53] 2 Tim. ii. 15. Ὀρθοτομοῦντα means the fashioning of the word preached, so as to render it intelligible, acceptable, effectual; as the workman *cuts* the stone or wood, to suit the particular object about which he is employed.

[54] *E.G.* Luke xxi. 14, 15: "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." 2 Cor. xii. 9: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness;" and the like.

perpetual, the perpetual obligation on Christians to have a separate officiating order to succeed the first, seems to be a necessary inference. The character and pretensions of this order may, indeed, become changed, so far as to be inconsistent with Christianity itself; but this should only induce us to ascertain clearly, and to keep steadily in view, the true object and intent of the institution. Beyond this connexion with the formal observances of religion, however, the ministers of the Gospel may be viewed in the light of special *dispensers of the truths contained in the New Testament.* This is their chief and most important office; and if it be true, that one of the purposes divinely intended in the formation of the Church was the dispensing of these truths; the appointment of this order, as one of the methods, becomes an obligation, independent even of apostolical precedent or specific rule.[55] The great caution to be observed in the Church was, strictly to adhere to this view of its ministers. There was a continual temptation presented to the Jewish converts, in the habit of looking at religion, as it existed in the former Church of God; and equally so to the Gentile converts, in their long familiarity with the corruptions of the heathen world. In both, the minister of religion had been regarded as the mean of communication between the worshipper and the Being worshipped; between Man who sought Divine instruction, and the Deity from whom it was supposed to proceed. But Christians were left without any such mediator on earth. Their High Priest was no longer visible; and the sacred record was the only mode of sensible communication which had been left; Christ was seen no more, and the Holy Ghost was no longer outwardly manifested. The Christian ministers, therefore, were designed to be the organ of the Church,[56] in dispensing these Divine oracles; not themselves the oracles and sources of information.

Bishops.

That the primitive bishops claimed for themselves no higher character, is very plain from the tenor of their lives, and from the language of their genuine remains. It is evident from the writings of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, that the terms "Priest," (ἱερεὺς,)[57] "Vicar of Christ," "Mediator," "Order of the altar,"

[55] Ignatius's assertion is strictly correct, "Without these it cannot be called a *Church;*" that is, the Christian society could no longer fulfil the object of its institution, whatever other means might be substituted.—Ep. ad Trall. Sec. 3.

[56] Ignatius calls them, in his Epistles to the Trallians, "servants *of the Church* of God," see Sec. 2.

[57] It may be necessary to state to the mere English reader, that there are two Greek words, of very different import, which we translate indifferently "priest." Ἱερεὺς is one, and is the term applied to him whose office it was to sacrifice, or otherwise to mediate between the worshipper and the Being worshipped; the other, πρεσβύτερος, signifies an elder; and was applied to those ministers in the Christian Church, whose age or office entitled them to such distinction. To Christ alone, under the Gospel dispensation, was the term ἱερεὺς applicable, and to him alone it is applied in the New Testament; but, from the common custom among the early Christian teachers, of illustrating the respect and observance due to the Gospel ministers, from that which had been paid to the Jewish priests, the term ἱερεὺς gradually became transferred to the Gospel minister. The same occurred with respect to many other Christian institutions. The Lord's table, *e.g.* acquired the title of "the

(τάξις τοῦ βήματος,) were not yet the appropriate vocabulary of the Christian's language.[58] Although the order of bishops had succeeded the apostles in the government of the Church, yet they presumed not to assume the title. "They who are now called bishops," writes St. Ambrose,[59] "were originally called apostles; but the holy apostles being dead, they who were ordained after them to govern the Church, could not arrive at the excellency of the first; nor had they the testimony of miracles, but were in many other respects inferior to them. *Therefore they thought it not decent to assume to themselves the name of apostles;* but dividing the names, they left to presbyters the name of the presbytery, and they themselves were called bishops."

Presbyters and Deacons.

The same modest pretensions are manifested in the titles of the other ministers. No other official distinction was preserved beyond that of presbyter and deacon. Prophets, Interpreters, Helps, and the long list of extraordinary agents, had found successors and substitutes in men qualified by ordinary means; but these presumed no more than the bishops, to retain the titles of the persons whose place they occupied only in part. This scruple about assuming titles of distinct rank, has inclined many to think, that what are afterwards found in the Church, under the general denomination of the five inferior orders of clergy, did not yet exist. These were the sub-deacons, acolythists, exorcists, readers, and door-keepers. It is certainly true, that these words do not occur in the genuine remains of the apostolical Fathers; and, in short, no term indicating a lower order than that of deacon. Nevertheless, as has been before pointed out, this term was very comprehensive, and originally included even apostles. Its specific application became gradually more and more narrowed, as the distinct kinds of ministers or deacons received appropriate names. At the period to which we are now arrived, this general appellation may still have been the only one, for some or all of these five offices, which were afterwards distinguished by specific names. The deaconship of the New Testament evidently comprehended many offices not afterwards included under it. These very five offices, and others, may possibly then

Five inferior Orders.

altar;" the bread and wine, that of "the sacrifice." It is surprising, how much the accidents which befal language affect even the practical views of those who employ it. At this day, we may trace to these very ambiguities a proneness to apply to the several parts of the Christian institution, reasoning drawn from those parts of the Jewish which do not coincide with them, further than that both now bear the same name. The use made of this fallacy by the Church of Rome, in its gradual assumption of those powers and privileges for its bishop, which can only belong to a pontiff or high priest, are now too well known to require further notice. See particularly Encyclop. Metropolit. Art. LOGIC, and Whately's Sermons, Sermon V.

[58] Bp. Beveridge, in answer to Mr. Daille's objections to the authenticity of the apostolical canon, has maintained the primitive use of these terms; but his testimonies really prove no more than that they were sometimes used, always perhaps, figuratively. His remarks on the use of ἐπισκόπος and πρεσβυτέρος, are more correct. See Beveregii Codex Can. Lib. II. C. 10.

[59] Cited by Amalarius, de Offic. Ecc. Lib. II. C. 13, and by Bingham, Ecc. Ant. B. II. C. 11.

have existed long before they were separately named. Among the deaconesses even, similar distinctions may have obtained, without any distinguishing title. We read, at least, of employments assigned to them, which it would be obviously inconvenient to unite generally in the same person; for instance, the offices of door-keeper, and of attendant on the sick.

Deaconesses.

The principal need of these female ministers has been already pointed out: and, accordingly, as the character of the Christian preachers became better known, the suspicions and scruples of strangers were less likely to be awakened, by the visits of male catechists to all ages and sexes, for the purpose of instruction; and the order of deaconesses would naturally be discontinued. This very soon began to be the case: although the remnant of such an order existed in the Latin Church until the tenth or eleventh century; and in the Greek Church a century later. In the age of the apostolic Fathers they are spoken of under the same title which St. Luke may be supposed to apply to them in the Acts, that of widows.[60]

Acts vi. 1.

Superior authority of the Bishops.

Over all these different orders, the authority of the bishop was distinct and supreme. "Let nothing," writes Ignatius to the Church of Smyrna,[61] "relating to the Church, be done without the bishop;" and, again, to Polycarp, "Let nothing be done without your sanction."[62] The superintending authority in all spiritual matters seems to have extended even to the right of administering the Sacraments. For the same Father writes, to remind the Church of Smyrna, that "it is not lawful either to baptize, or celebrate the feast of love, without the bishop."[63] Nothing, indeed, seems more reasonable and natural, than that the discretionary exercise of the minister's office should be various in different ages. Education, and other circumstances, might render the clergy, universally, fit in one age, for that which only some were qualified to perform in another. We expect, accordingly, to find at different periods a different authority exercised by the bishop over the subordinate clergy. It was once deemed inexpedient in our own Church, to allow all the clergy to preach; and a similar prudence may have dictated a like caution in the regulation of the duties of the primitive clergy; which would gradually and of course relax, as the cause ceased.

It is, however, the office of the Christian ministers, as dispensers of the truths of the New Testament record, to which our attention is now directed; and if it be inquired, in what way these several orders discharged this office, under the superintendence of their bishop, and what part the bishop himself took in this common

[60] Ignat. Ep. ad Smyrn. C. 13. Ἀσπάζομαι τοὺς οἴκους τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου σὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις, καὶ τὰς παρθένους τὰς λεγομένας Χήρας. See Cotelerius's note on the expression; see also Ep. ad Polyc. C. 4.

[61] Ch. 8.

[62] Ch. 4.

[63] Ep. ad Smyrn. C. 9.

duty; we shall, perhaps, find no further difference between the method originally pursued and that now established among the purest reformed Churches, than is accounted for, and warranted, by the difference of circumstances.

Public Reading of the Scriptures.

The public reading of portions of the Scriptures in the service of the Church; and even of the prayers, as made up in a great measure of scriptural expressions, may of itself be reckoned among the ministerial duties of *dispensing* Gospel truth. Indeed, in an age when neither books nor readers were general, this would be even more important than at present; because, whatever more convenient forms were devised for the conveying of those truths, it was necessary to convince all, that to the Bible they were to be traced; and this could only be done by reading or hearing it read. If, therefore, there be any difference in the proportion which the lessons have borne to the prayers in the primitive Church services, and in the service of any modern society of Christians, it might be expected to have been generally greater formerly than now.

Authorities for this custom.

Such was the case. The remains of the apostolical Fathers do not, indeed, furnish direct testimony,[64] to the custom of reading the Scriptures, as part of the Church service; but the writings of those who immediately succeeded them are sufficiently clear and ample on the point; and speak of it as a custom originally established, and coeval with the Church service. Justin Martyr, Chrysostom, and St. Basil, may be appealed to as decisive authorities for the early existence of the usage; which, indeed, could not have been neglected without so flagrant a violation of the fundamental principles of the Church's establishment, as to have occasioned the neglect, and the origin of it, to be recorded and handed down to us. The mere silence of history on such a point would have left us warranted in maintaining the observance of the custom.

Preaching.

At the same time, the public reading of the scriptural record was not the only, nor the principal office which the ministers of the Church had to perform, as dispensers of the truths contained in it. That record was the test, the source of all that was to be communicated to the world; but it was left to the discretionary power of the Church to shape the various forms in which it should be presented to mankind—to the Church collectively, to its ministers individually. The Gospel ministers were to expound, to arrange, and to accommodate the Divine truths to the education, habits, and other circumstances of their hearers; looking in each instance to the mode in which instruction would be best understood, and most readily listened to. Hence, the importance of the preacher's character—not as the eloquent master of the feelings of an audience—but far more, as the judicious dispenser of Gospel truth; in

[64] For the indirect testimony to be derived from these writings, see the remarks on the public reading of the Scriptures, considered as one of the means of *preserving* the sacred record.

applying, and teaching others to apply, to particular cases, the general principles and precepts of the New Testament; in arranging systematically the doctrines there incidentally taught; or in giving clearness to what might be there obscure, by combining separate passages, and by all other legitimate methods of uninspired exposition. In such an employment, the danger, the chief danger at least, would arise from too great an accommodation to the previous tastes and habits of thought in those addressed. The converted Gentile philosopher would best understand the Christian mysteries, when illustrated by allusions to the metaphysical theories with which his fancy had been previously familiar; the Jew would be made more ready to listen and to understand, by the continual use of images belonging to the Old dispensation, to clothe and recommend the topics of the New. In the great inspired preacher to the Gentiles, his successors and imitators would observe, perhaps, the splendid effect produced by his grafting Christian instruction on the manners, and even the prejudices, of men; and might, therefore, proceed the more fearlessly in the same track, without quite the same controlling wisdom. What he had gained by colouring his instructions with the memory of the law, and its venerable adjuncts, when addressing the Jew; or by alluding to the serious pursuits, or the amusements of the Gentile world, when the Gentiles were addressed; emboldened, perhaps, the first uninspired preachers even beyond the bounds of prudence. They taught, we have every reason to believe, truth and only truth; but, if we may judge from the remains, even of the apostolical Fathers, it would be uncandid not to admit an over-readiness to allow those truths (in some cases) to receive their form and impression from the previous notions, both of Jew and Gentile. It was the easier method, nor can we wonder to find it adopted. But to this only can we attribute the ready introduction into the Church's language of the terms above mentioned, "priest," (ἱερεὺς,) "mediator," &c., as applied to the ministers of that religion which acknowledges no priest on earth, and only "one Mediator between God and Men, the man Christ Jesus." Harmless as it might have been then, it is, perhaps, the first link in that chain of corruption which ended in the creation of a Christian pontiff.[65] Their accommodation to the Gentile prejudices, or rather to the philosophy of the Gentiles, was by no means so great;

Danger from the accommodation of Preaching to the particular hearers.

1 Tim. ii. 5.

[65] It was, doubtless, in conformity with the custom of the synagogue, that the sermon used in the primitive Church to be almost universally delivered by the preacher *sitting* whilst the congregation *stood*. (See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book XIV. C. IV. Sect. 24.) "The Scribes and Pharisees" (said our Lord) "*sit* in Moses' seat," (Matt. xxiii. 2;) and his own example might have been considered as a further warrant for adopting the Jewish usage in a matter of indifference. He is described, even in childhood, as *sitting* and disputing among the doctors in the temple; (Luke ii. 46.) And again we read, chap. iv. 20, that after He had stood up to read the prophet Esaias, He *sat down* to teach the people. See also chap. v. 3, and John viii. 2. His avowal, as recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, chap. xxvi. 55, is, "I *sat* daily with you, teaching in the temple."

although occasionally discoverable in some laboured illustrations of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation.[66]

Custom of the African Church in Preaching.

It was to the sacred record, however, and to their own preaching, only as a particular form of communicating it, that they directed the attention of their audience; and it deserves to be recorded, as a remarkable illustration of this fact, that in the African Church a custom long prevailed among the preachers, of quoting only part of any scriptural passage, cited in their sermons, and pausing for the remainder to be filled up by the congregation. An instance of it may be found in Augustin's Sermons.[67] That the character[68] of the primitive *preaching* was such as is here described, we chiefly infer from the character of the primitive *writings;* and these being in the form of Epistles, require some observations distinct from what is applicable to them, in common with preaching.

Epistles.

The custom of writing public letters is a distinct branch of the office of the Christian ministers, in dispensing the truths of the Gospel; and one for which, no less than preaching, they had the example of the apostles. Indeed, when we consider the opportunity afforded by such a mode of address, for the bishop to give an interest to his instructions, by allusions to matters of local and peculiar interest, which could not so properly be introduced in a Sermon or a Charge, it is rather surprising to find so early and so total a disuse of this good old custom. It is probable, that few attempts to exhort or to instruct as a preacher would be so interesting, as the opening of the successive packets, for instance, which conveyed to the churches of Asia the farewell injunctions of Ignatius; and Polycarp's serious instructions to the Philippians were, doubtless, remembered better in an Epistle, which disdained not an allusion to conversational matters, than if he had been compelled to address them only with the solemnity of the Christian preacher.[69]—Clement, whose First Epistle to the Corinthians is perhaps, on the whole, the most valuable of the remains of the apostolical Fathers, seems not to have been sensible of this advantage, in the method which he nevertheless employed; and his Epistle is therefore a treatise, compared with an apostolical Epistle, cold, drily systematic, and uninteresting. It is scarcely possible to devise a better method of appreciating St. Paul as a writer, in this particular department, (as a writer, namely, of public letters to bodies of Christians,) than by comparing with Clement's his Epistles to the same Church written

Advantages of this mode of instruction.

[66] Almost all the early heresies may be traced to the presumptuous attempt to speculate *metaphysically* on the nature of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. St. Paul speaks of such speculations as "falsely called knowledge;" and warns Timothy against them, as endangering the faith of the instructor and the instructed. For the results which ensued in no long interval, we need only refer to Irenæus's First Book adv. Hæreses.

[67] See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book XIV. Ch. IV. Sec. 26, where the passage is cited.

[68] That such was the character of their epistolary instruction, will be manifest from a cursory glance at the remains of the apostolical Fathers, which abound with references to scriptural authority.

[69] See ch. xi. and xiii. of the Epistle.

on nearly the same subject. At the same time, it must be considered, that Clement was writing in the name of the *Church* at Rome, and addressing a Church not peculiarly his charge. Now, it is out of this latter circumstance that an *Epistle* derives its most interesting topics.

It was thus, then, that the primitive Church fulfilled its office of dispensing the truths of the sacred record, through the agency of its various orders of ministers. They read publicly the Word of God; they preached it; and they sent it to the absent by letters. Of the mode of appointing these ministers, some account has been given in a preceding part of this inquiry; enough, perhaps, for our purpose. It does not appear, from the remains of the apostolic Fathers, whether the performance of this rite required a bishop. Still, as this practice is mentioned by Jerome, Chrysostom, and succeeding writers; and noticed by them, not as an innovation, but as a settled usage, there can be no reasonable doubt of its primitive adoption.

Revenue.

The revenue for the support of the clergy in this season of the Church's poverty, appears to have arisen from the continual contributions of the laity in each Church; aided in some instances by the accumulation of a fund, the probable origin of which, in the apostolic days, has been already suggested.

Bishops ordained by the Apostles.

The catalogue of the bishops, ordained by the apostles, is, according to the most probable account, as follows:[70]—

Jerusalem.

I. At Jerusalem: James, the apostle, and Simeon, the son of Cleopas.

Authorities: Unanimous testimony, especially that of Jerome, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, the author of "The Apostolical Constitutions," Hegesippus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Dionysius of Corinth, as quoted by Eusebius.

Antioch.

II. Antioch: Euodius and Ignatius.

Baronius conjectures, that they were contemporary; one for the Gentile, and the other for the Jewish portion of the Church. But it must be admitted that this is not a very likely arrangement, when we consider that one of the great efforts of the apostolical founders was to amalgamate Jew and Gentile into one Church, and to preserve the *unity* of the Spirit. They are represented as successive bishops by Eusebius, Theodoret, Athanasius, Origen, and Jerome. At the same time, the expedient might have become necessary for a time at Antioch, as appears to have been the case at Rome.

Smyrna.

III. Smyrna: Polycarp.

Authorities: Jerome, Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius.

Ephesus.

IV. Ephesus: Timothy.

See APOSTOLIC AGE.

[70] See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. B. II. C. I. Sect. 4.

Authorities: Eusebius, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Jerome, Hilary the deacon, the author of "The Passion of Timothy" in Photius, and Theodoret, who expresses himself singularly enough, saying, "that he was bishop, under the title of an apostle."[71]

Crete. V. Crete: Titus.

The same authorities. Eusebius makes both metropolitans. Hooker adopts this view, in his "Eccles. Polity."

Athens. VI. Athens: Dionysius the Areopagite, and Publius Quadratus.

Authorities: Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, a writer of the second century, quoted by Eusebius. It was Quadratus who presented an *apology* to the emperor Hadrian.

Philippi. VII. Philippi: Epaphroditus.

Authority: Theodoret.

Rome. VIII. Rome: Linus, Anacletus, and Clement.

The order of succession between these three is not very easily determined. Irenæus, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Eusebius, Ruffinus, Jerome, Optatus, Epiphanius, and Augustin, all contain notices which may help the inquirer. The most probable mode of solving the difficulty is, that in the distracted state of the Church at Rome, the same necessity, which required the care both of St. Paul and St. Peter, namely, the aversion of the Jewish party to the great Gentile apostle, might have caused a division of that Church into two societies; over that, composed chiefly of Gentiles, Linus may have been appointed by St. Paul, and succeeded by Anacletus; over that, consisting of Jews chiefly, Clement may have been appointed by St. Peter. As Clement survived Linus and Anacletus, and by that time the spirit of dissension had well nigh ceased, the Church was probably reunited and again became one, as it originally was, when St. Paul first wrote and preached to them; and thus Clement became the first sole bishop. The assertion of Eusebius, that St. Paul and St. Peter were joint founders, favours this view; which is, however, subject to the objection above noticed, respecting a similar case at Antioch.

Hierapolis. IX. Hierapolis: Papias.

He was a disciple of St. John, and contemporary with Ignatius and Polycarp.[72] Although, therefore, there is no direct assertion in ancient authors, of his being ordained by the apostle, he may be numbered among those who were so ordained.

[71] See, too, the quotation above given from St. Ambrose. It is likely enough, indeed, that Timothy was called an apostle, because *sent* by St. Paul to preside over the Church at Ephesus; and it was perhaps subsequently, to avoid the confusion between apostles of Christ and these apostles of his apostles, that the latter were called by a synonymous term angels, or messengers. Under this title St. John speaks of them in the Revelations. This title also must have been liable to objection, because applying so specifically to an unearthly messenger; and still more, when the succession of bishops in established sees began to take place, and a new bishop was not necessarily *sent* to preside over a new see, and ceased therefore to be considered in the light of a messenger, apostle, or angel. His *superintending* character was now the chief, or only one which claimed regard, and hence the natural transition to, and permanent adoption of, the title *Episcopus, superintendent.*

[72] Irenæi, Lib. V. C. 33.

Not that we are to suppose it necessary that every bishop who was consecrated while there was yet one apostle alive, should have been consecrated by the laying on of that apostle's hands. A Church once founded had in itself the principle of reproductiveness. It was self-sufficient both to perpetuate itself and its ministry, and also to found other Churches, and to endow them with the same principle.

But what if, in the lapse of time, any Christian community, although pure in faith, and in practice otherwise, should have been irregularly formed or continued? What, if the chain which should connect its ministers with the original ordination of the apostles should have been, in any instance, broken? Is there any sacramental virtue transmitted from one qualified hand to another, and only thus transmissible? And, would the members of any Christian community forfeit the blessings of the Christian covenant, if the officiating minister should be one in whose apostolic pedigree there should be this blot, whether known or unknown? Such a dogma is surely not only unsupported by Scripture, but is at variance with the spirit of our Gospel institution. The difficulty, not to say impossibility, of assuring ourselves that the succession is pure in any individual case, would make the condition of every Christian one of unavoidable uncertainty about a matter essential to his salvation. Who could trace this connexion between any clergyman of the present day and an apostle, and prove that there has never intervened any flaw of ordination or of persons qualified to ordain? Those who maintain this doctrine seem to be (to adopt the words of an eminent writer[73]) "confounding together the unbroken apostolical succession of *a Christian ministry generally*, and the same succession in an unbroken line, of *this or that individual minister*. The existence of such *an order of men as Christian ministers*, continuously from the time of the apostles to this day, is perhaps as complete a moral certainty as any historical fact can be; because (independently of the various incidental notices by historians, of such a class of persons) it is plain that if, at the present day, or a century ago, or ten centuries ago, a number of men had appeared in the world, professing (as our clergy do) to hold a recognised office in a Christian Church, to which they had been regularly appointed as successors to others, whose predecessors, in like manner, had held the same, and so on, from the times of the apostles—if, I say, such a pretence had been put forth by a set of men assuming an office which no one had ever heard of before, it is plain that they would at once have been refuted and exposed. And as this will apply equally to each successive generation of Christian ministers till we come up to the time when the institution was confessedly new, that is, to the time when Christian ministers were appointed by the apostles, who professed them-

[73] Archbishop Whately's Kingdom of Christ, p. 222.

selves eye-witnesses of the resurrection, we have (as Leslie has remarked[74]) a standing monument, in the Christian ministry, of the fact of that event as having been proclaimed immediately after the time when it was said to have occurred. This, therefore, is fairly brought forward as an evidence of its truth.

"But if each man's Christian hope is made to rest on his receiving the Christian ordinances at the hands of a minister to whom the sacramental virtue that gives efficacy to those ordinances, has been transmitted in unbroken succession from hand to hand, every thing must depend on *that particular* minister; and *his* claim is by no means established from our merely establishing the uninterrupted existence *of such a class of men as Christian ministers.* 'You teach me,' a man might say, 'that my salvation depends on the possession, by *you*—the *particular* pastor under whom I am placed—of a certain qualification; and when I ask for the proof that you possess it, you prove to me that it is possessed *generally* by a *certain class* of persons of whom you are one, and probably by a large majority of them!' How ridiculous it would be thought, if a man laying claim to the throne of some country should attempt to establish it without producing and proving his own pedigree, merely by showing that that country *had always been under hereditary regal government!*"

PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH BY MISSIONARIES.

Bishops, priests, and deacons, then, were the regular and appointed agents of every Church, for dispensing the contents of the sacred record amongst its members; each according to his office. It was one great purpose for which the Church was founded, to *dispense* the truths so intrusted to it; and the institution of these orders was one of the principal means employed for accomplishing this object. But this duty of the Church and of its ministers, would have been very imperfectly, and (if one may say so) unconstitutionally performed, if their labours had been limited to their respective societies, or to Christians only. One of the marks set on the new Church of God, to distinguish it from his former holy people, was, its universality. Directly opposed to the principle on which the Jewish polity was instituted—a principle, namely, of separation, guarded by a fence-work so intricate and elaborate, that it could never have afforded a free admission to the great mass of mankind—directly opposed to this, was the precept of the Gospel, "Go forth into *all lands*, and preach the Gospel to *every creature.*" What was, perhaps, more effectual, too, than formal precept, was the genius and character of the institution. The separation of the Divine worship from any one temple, or local point of association; the substitution of *principles*, on which sacred societies may be formed to any extent and number, instead of the establishment of

Universality of the Gospel dispensation.

[74] Short Method with Deists.

any one society; the removal of all necessary ordinances connected with the customs of any one people, or the peculiarities of any one climate, or country; all qualified the new dispensation for a universal one. On those, then, who were intrusted with the New Testament, the duty of promoting this object by all legitimate means, was impressed, as well by the character of that holy deposit, as by the special precepts it conveyed to them. Even complete success was promised at some indefinite period, to animate the efforts of every age; which, without the assurance of prophecy, might still seem, in the ordinary course of Providence, never likely to be fully successful.

Hence the necessity of Missions.

It is in the character of propagators of the new faith, that the inspired teachers of the Word are chiefly presented to our view in holy writ; as it was, indeed, their chief characteristic. But the duty of sustaining the same character, (as did all ministerial duties,) devolved on their uninspired successors. The ministers of the primitive Church were not only employed in teaching at home; but were sent abroad to plant the faith, and to give freely that gift which they had freely received.

Caution respecting the History of Missions.

Concerning the personal labours of these early missionaries there is much fable, and no means of separating from it whatever may be true. On the whole, it is, no doubt, better for us, that we should only know their history by its results; lest, in our admiration for the saints and martyrs of Christ, we should forget to give the glory to God. In no case is this temptation more strongly felt, than in contemplating the adventurous course of a missionary. Even although he may perform no "signs" and "wonders," he seems to disturb the established course of the world. Ancient prejudices, national habits and institutions, fall before him; the very passions of men seem to be cast out by his word; and his work itself looks, in every age, the result of miracle.

Much, too, of what is recorded concerning the planting of the primitive Churches, has been vitiated through the ambition of every Church, at some period, to refer its origin to an apostle; or, at least, to one especially appointed for its establishment by an apostle. Hence, doubtless, many of the worthy successors of God's inspired servants have been robbed of that grateful tribute, which posterity would still gladly pay to their zeal and fidelity in the cause of the Gospel; and a general statement only remains to be given, of what may be considered as the undistinguishable labours of the inspired and uninspired in the primitive Church; undistinguishable, I mean, beyond what clue is afforded by Scripture.

A similar rivalry among the different parts of every Christian country, of Europe especially, to be foremost, or among the first, who were elected and called, renders it no less difficult to ascertain the precise places wherein the Word was early planted; even in countries concerning which the most certain testimony is preserved, that they *were* visited and partially enlightened.

Their progress.

Greece, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Great Britain, and many other parts of Europe, have each some authority to trace their first conversion to apostles, or their immediate successors. The labours of St. Paul and St. Peter at Rome, give much reason for supposing, that throughout Italy Christianity soon found converts; and, that the settlement of a Church in Spain was contemplated at least by St. Paul, long before his death, his own words bear testimony.[75] Macedonia and Greece, and the reception which the Gospel had met with there, under St. Paul's ministry, need not be mentioned. In Asia, too, we trace its progress on inspired authority from Judæa to Syria, and from Syria through Asia Minor. How far the labours of Paul, Barnabas, and their attendants, were followed up by those who, inspired or uninspired, strove to tread in their steps, we may judge from the accounts of Irenæus[76] and Tertullian,[77] both writers of the second century, and both asserting that Christ was by that time worshipped throughout the East. Even to India, indeed, his name and worship must have already penetrated, if Eusebius be correct in stating, that Pantenus found there a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, which was reported to have been left by St. Bartholomew.[78] If we turn our eye to the condition of Africa in those times, it would be hardly too much to assert, that it must even at that period have numbered amongst its believers, whether colonists or aboriginals, more than it can boast after the long interval of 1800 years.[79] Alexandria in Egypt was sure to imbibe and to communicate every new system which appeared in the world; and the constant intercourse which it maintained with Jerusalem, and also with Cyprus, the native island of Barnabas, will readily account for the early and strong interest felt there in the new religion; and could not but produce zealous efforts to propagate its doctrines throughout Egypt, and the more enlightened parts of Africa. And, perhaps, monuments of their labours might at this day have remained, under God's blessing, by which, compared with our own, we might have estimated the effect of time and different circumstances on Churches so differently situated, while those who now sit in darkness might have been themselves the agents of enlightening others, had the Gospel

[75] See Romans xv. 24, 28.

[76] Irenæi adversus Hæres. Lib. IV. C. 67.

[77] Tertullian, adv. Judæos, C. 7.

[78] Eusebii Hist. Ecc. Lib. V. C. 10. Mosheim supposes, that Eusebius meant this not of the Indians, but of certain Jews, who were inhabitants of Arabia Felix. (See Ecc. Hist. Vol. I. p. 149.) This certainly is not implied. Eusebius only states, that the book was written in Hebrew; and it might possibly, therefore, have been a copy, not originally designed for the Indians, but left with them by their apostolic missionary, because he had none in their own language. Or, it is very conceivable, that it might have been even an Indian translation made by Bartholomew for their use, and written by him in *Hebrew characters*, (which they would easily learn,) because more familiar and more readily used by him. The Greek is Ἑβραίων, γράμμασι τὴν τοῦ Ματθαίου καταλεῖψαι γραφήν.

[79] By the end of the second century the proportion of Christians in Carthage was so great, that Tertullian speaks of them as constituting one-tenth of the whole number of inhabitants. "Quid ipsa Carthago passura est! decimanda a te."—*Ad Scapulam.*

been preached in apostolic purity. But Christianity suffered a corruption in Egypt, more cruel than did the Israelitish faith of old. It went forth from Alexandria adulterated with vain philosophy of every kind; and the worship of the one true God was again converted into a polytheism, the more dangerous, because no longer gross, sensible, and palpable in its absurdity, but subtle, spiritual, philosophical.[80]

It would be vain to inquire into the various steps, by which Christianity maintained its struggle with the powers of this world, and either gained or lost ground in these several countries; much more to attempt its history in each separate church or city; but there are some Churches, the fate of which has been so much more closely connected than the rest with all Christian societies in all ages, that any notices which may be gleaned of their primitive condition may not be unnacceptable. Jerusalem is, of course, one of these.

THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

St. James.

Symeon.

The history of the Church at Jerusalem, until the death of its first bishop St. James, is no further known, than from the scriptural record. On the martyrdom of that apostle, Symeon, the son of Cleopas, and, as has been asserted, one of the seventy disciples of our Lord, was appointed in his room. The importance of the see may be conjectured, from the anxiety of the whole Christian world about the succession. Apostles, and other eminent men, among their coadjutors, were present at the election, and aiding by their advice.[81] In this, and in other instances, we may recognise the operation of the most unqualified faith in the fulfilment of the Christian prophecies.[82] The period was at hand, when our Lord's mournful prediction, respecting the fate of Jerusalem and its blinded people, was known to be approaching to its accomplishment.[83] The risk and distress to which even his followers would be exposed, had been foretold in no equivocal terms. On the appearance of the fatal ensign of desolation, their flight was to be instantaneous, whatever sacrifice it might require. The dissolution of the nearest connexions which existed between the believer and the friends or kindred who yet held back or wavered, was to be awfully abrupt. Even the positive wo, announced to those who should be "with child, or give suck, in those days," can scarcely be applied to the Jews alone; but accords with the closing assertion, that unless those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; and that they were shortened for the elect's sake.

Effect of the Prophecies relative to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matt. xxiv. 22; Mark xiii. 20.

[80] Consult Cave's "Life of Justin Martyr," whose remains, as well as those of Origen, abound in Platonism.

[81] Euseb. Hist. Lib. III. C. 11.

[82] A similar instance, is the collection made for the poor Christians of Jerusalem, as a provision against a predicted famine.—See Acts xi. 27—30.

[83] Besides the prophetic signs given, it was expressly declared, "This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be fulfilled."—Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32.

The solemn suspense, with which the whole Christian world looked on, from one prophetic sign to another, for the consummation of this scene of sorrows, must have been more intense than that which is said to seize on the minds of men, when the first shock of an earthquake awakens an anticipation of a second and that of a third. In the mortal and visible agents which were at work, producing the catastrophe, *they* saw the slow appearing sign of the Son of man in heaven. But the faith that made them tremble, made them proportionably resolute to abide in Jerusalem, and to wait for the signal of their departure. Under the superintendence of the mild and conciliating St. James, the most prudent human measures were likely to co-operate with the promised aid of heaven. But, in the midst of his exemplary course, they beheld him fall a martyr to the bigotry of the Jews, and the Church in Jerusalem obliged suddenly to appoint another bishop. Hence the general interest which was felt in Symeon's election.

Between the appointment of Symeon, and the war which ended in the destruction of the holy city, the affairs of the Church were probably conducted with a prudence which did not disappoint the Christians; for, in the interval, we hear of no further attempts against the peace of the believers, nor of any internal dissensions.

Daniel ix.24.

It was during the reign of Nero, that hope long deferred emboldened the Jews to revolt. The seventy weeks of Daniel had been long fulfilled; and while they obstinately rejected the claims of a spiritual Messiah, they as obstinately clung to the hope of a temporal deliverer. Up to the time now mentioned, they patiently and sullenly endured all oppression, in the daily expectation, that their avenger would appear descending from the clouds of heaven. So violent, however, had their sense of wrongs become, and so rancorous their suppressed hatred to the Romans, that on the first signal the whole of Judæa was in a state of determined rebellion.

Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14; Luke xxi. 20.

As the accomplishment of our Saviour's prediction drew nearer, the signs of the end of the Jewish polity had been discerned, and have been recorded even by unbelievers. But the trial of the believer's faith, was to wait for the last sign, which, humanly speaking, was to put it out of his power to escape. Not until the Roman standard, "the abomination of desolation," was brought to the siege of Jerusalem, and the holy city was "encompassed by armies," did the Church quit it. Before the formidable character of the rebellion was known, Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, marched with the united forces of his province against the capital, not doubting that the revolt would thus be at once suppressed; and being forced to raise the siege, and retire, a respite was given, whereby the Christians were providentially and signally left an opportunity for escape. Their city of refuge was Pella, which, being occupied by Gentiles, escaped the fury of the conquerors;

The Christians withdraw from the City.

and here, during all the horrors of the war, and the subsequent miseries which resulted from it, they remained in perfect security. Not a hair of their heads perished. Luke xxi. 18.

In the third year of the war, (A.D. 70,) Vespasian, who had been appointed by Nero to conduct it, left his station for Egypt, in order to secure support in his attempt to wrest the imperial dignity from Vitellius. He had already advanced into Galilee, burnt Gadara, and razed Jotapata, (where Josephus, the historian, was taken prisoner,) and was preparing to march against Jerusalem, when the prospect of obtaining the empire induced him to leave to his son Titus the completion of his plans. Under his command, the Roman army invested the holy city; and after a siege of five months, marked by scenes of horror which would be incredible did we not connect them with the peculiar temper of the Jewish nation, Jerusalem was taken, sacked, and levelled with the earth. Its capture by Titus.

Only enough was left standing, to form quarters for a garrison, or to be a monument of the greatness of the city subdued. Its temple, which was then left without one stone upon another, has never yet been rebuilt; Julian tried to restore it, and failed. Will the Jews,—will any future Antichrist, be ever bold enough to renew the experiment?

As soon as the terrors of war were past, the Christian Church of Jerusalem returned to the desolate city; and took up its abode amidst its ruins. Here it existed until the final and utter destruction by Hadrian, who in the early part of his reign had rebuilt it, and called it *Ælia*. The Christians return.

Long before this latter event, the good Symeon had suffered martyrdom, having been permitted to preside over this first Christian Church, in its most trying season, for more than forty years; "God probably lengthening out his life," to use the words of a pious and learned man,[84] "that, as a skilful and faithful pilot, he might steer and conduct the affairs of the Church in those dismal and stormy days." Eusebius states, that he was put to death on information laid against him, that he was of the family of David. This, if true, strongly marks the impression made on the minds of the Romans, that the Jews were so convinced of the truth of the Messiah's time being come, as to make it unsafe to leave even the mild and aged Symeon amongst them, lest they should take him by force, and make him a king. Martyrdom of Symeon.

THE CHURCH AT ROME.

It requires some effort of imagination, to represent to ourselves, truly and fully, the feeling with which the imperial city was regarded throughout the world, in the first ages of Christianity. It was not only the greatest, the leading city of the universe; for in this point Causes of the assumed Supremacy of this Church.

[84] Cave, in his Life of St. Symeon.

of view, the influence of every association which flowed from it, might find a counterpart in the awe and admiration excited by turns for the capital of the Spanish, the French, or the British empires: but its character was distinct and supreme;—it stood alone, the one abode of authority and rule, to which all other places had contracted a relation of dependence and subjection. That the Church established there should, from the ordinary results of association, acquire a more august and dignified character, than similar societies elsewhere established, seems almost unavoidable. As it gradually numbered amongst its members more and more of those who held rank and influence in this great centre of worldly veneration, the principle of association would of course operate more strongly still. But when the Emperor himself, not only became enrolled among its members, but promoted the cause of Christ throughout the world, by the actual protection and patronage of the imperial government, any distinction of respect, unanimously conceded to that Christian body, through which, in the first instance, all these privileges and favours flowed, need not surprise us. We may readily understand that this tendency to exalt the Church at Rome would be likely to run into excess. The temptation would be twofold: in the several Churches, to honour extravagantly, and give undue precedence, to that one which had allied itself to a source of prosperity, of which all partook; in the Church elevated, to be puffed up by every successive token of respect, and to aim at a still higher elevation; and, as the origin and history of its original equality became less familiar and less clearly to be ascertained, to claim, as legalized rights, those titles and that precedence which accident and custom had created. Such was the condition of the Church at Rome, in its progress from that primitive age, when it dwelt in equality and unity with its brethren, to the period at which it began to search, in Scripture and in legend, for the title-deeds to a supremacy, which courtesy and custom had unthinkingly established. On the transfer of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople, it was first awakened to the uncertain tenure of those rights, which it had so long enjoyed, not indeed without question, but with security. It had set an example of temporal ambition, which could not but prove attractive to those who ministered to that ambition; and the Church of Constantinople, accordingly, claimed for itself a share of that rank, which, if rightly paid to its sister at Rome, while Rome was the imperial city, clearly now was due to that Church which occupied the corresponding station. Constantinople, as her Church represented, was "the new Rome," the young heir of Italian Rome's greatness; and, as such, she desired a participation at least of her rank and influence. Hence the diligence which even from the first the Church of Rome has displayed, in casting a shade over the origin of its greatness, and endeavouring to account for it on scriptural authority, however palpably insufficient. This has been, ever since, its method of defence;

and its purpose is partly answered, whenever the attention is thus decoyed from the real quarter, in which all its worldly grandeur was nestled and hatched.

It is with pleasure, therefore, that we look back on a period, when even at Rome the Church of Christ was only spiritual, her highest character, that of trustee of the record of revelation, and the first ambition of her bishops, to be dispensers of revealed truth, ministers of the word, or martyrs for its sake.

Barrenness of her early records.

It is not the least striking evidence of the correctness of this view of the Church of Rome, that peculiar as its condition was, in the seat of empire, its authentic records are as barren as those of the more remote and obscure Churches. Even the exact order of succession among the first three bishops, has furnished matter for elaborate controversy, a fact, which would of itself be subversive of the claim to any peculiar rights, founded on a regular succession of bishops from St. Peter. Such a lineal descent would surely have had a record, as accurately preserved by the care of Providence, for the satisfaction of the Christian Church, as was the lineage of David, for that of God's former people. In the early bishops, as successors of St. Peter too, we should expect a record of authority exercised, to illustrate the right vested in them.

Probability of the existence of two separate Churches at Rome.

The probability that St. Peter and St. Paul were joint founders of this important Church, (or rather, superintendents of the work, for the Church had its beginning in Rome before either apostle had visited it,) the former taking the apostleship to the Jews, the latter, that to the Gentile portion, has been already noticed. It has been further conjectured by some, that this division continued long after the decease of the two apostles; and that thus we are to account for the otherwise contradictory statements, on the one hand, that Clement was the third in the list of bishops, on the other, that he was ordained by St. Peter, to take charge of the Church, when his own martyrdom was at hand. This is, indeed, to suppose the existence of two Churches originally at Rome; the one governed by Linus, whom St. Paul appointed, and by his successor Anacletus, or Cletus; the other by Clement, who survived, and united both under one bishop. Undoubtedly, such an arrangement would never have been made but under peculiar and pressing circumstances, as one main feature in the Christian scheme was union of Jew and Gentile in the common bond of the Gospel. But as it is little less than certain, that during the ministry of the two apostles, such unity was not effected, the two parties may possibly have thus continued distinct, until an opportunity was afforded for their union. This appears to have occurred during Clement's bishopric; and it not a little coincides with this view, that the only genuine work of his which remains, is wholly occupied with the subject of unity and Christian love, as the highest characteristic of a Church. If this view, which is sanctioned by the learned Cave, and is, perhaps, the

only one that reconciles the statements of history, be admitted, the list of early bishops will stand thus:[85]

For the Gentile portion: Linus, and Cletus, or Anacletus.

For the Jewish portion: Clement.

For the whole reunited: Clement.

Epistle of Clement.

The Epistle to which I allude, must have been written after this union took place; for, although it is called an Epistle of Clement, yet it is really an Epistle from the Church at Rome to the Church of Corinth; and the strict intimacy which subsisted between these two Churches, and which amply accounts for such an Epistle having been written, was probably through the Gentiles, rather than through the Jewish converts. For it is to be remembered, that their link of union was St. Paul, who at Corinth first met with Aquila and Priscilla. To his residence at Corinth, they doubtless traced the first interest which he took in their conversion; and it is more than probable, that that interest would be shared by the Corinthians themselves, and be the foundation of a lasting intimacy. That such an intimacy did subsist between these two Churches may be proved from an Epistle, written by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, to the Church of Rome, towards the end of the second century; part of which is preserved by Eusebius, (Lib. IV. C. 23;) and may further account for what is there noticed, that the above-mentioned Epistle of Clement used to be read at Corinth as a portion of the Church service. This Epistle, then, is an interesting monument of the peculiar connexion between the two Churches. It is not the decree of a superior to an inferior body of Christians, but the affectionate remonstrance of friends and fellow-christians on the renewal of those schisms at Corinth, which had before called for the interference of St. Paul. The Church of Rome reminds them (C. 47) of their common apostle's authority and advice, as still preserved in those Epistles; and, as if careful not to offend by appearing to assume any authority over them, by this act of friendly interference, accompanies all its advice with expressions like these; "Beloved, in this Epistle we are not only suggesting advice to you, but refreshing our own minds with our duty; for our station is the same, and the same our course of duty." "Beloved, the custom we adopt of reproving one another is excellent, and beyond measure useful; for it unites us to the will of God;" and it concludes with nothing stronger than an anxious wish that the messengers may bring back an account of that harmony which they so desired and prayed for. Is it likely that the Church of Rome or its bishop, would have

Disproves the claim or admission of any Supremacy.

[85] More than one instance will be found, subsequently recorded in ecclesiastical history, of schisms being ended by the temporary appointment of two bishops. See in Theodoret (Lib. V. C. 3,) the proposal of Melitus, bishop of Antioch, to Paulinus, to settle the opposition between them in this manner. The same offer was made by the Catholic bishops of Africa to the Donatists, in the conference between them at Carthage; and from the way in which it was proposed, it would seem to have been, at that time, no unusual expedient. "Nec *novum aliquid* fiet," &c.—Collat. Carthag. Cognito 1. Sec. 16. Labbæi Concil. Tom. II. p. 1352.

neglected to mingle salutary threats of punishment and hints of a superintending authority with its exhortations, as St. Paul did in his Epistles, if either Church or bishop had then possessed apostolical control or superintendence over other Churches? Indeed, if such an authority had been vested in the Church of Rome, it is impossible that no more should be left on record of its intercourse with the other primitive Churches, in a season which, above all others, seemed to require the active superintendence of a common Head, if any there were on earth.

So also the Epistle of Ignatius.

Subsequently to the writing of this Epistle, all, perhaps, that deserves notice concerning the state of affairs at Rome, is the Epistle which Ignatius addressed to them, in his journey thither as a condemned martyr. This Epistle, no less than the former, although in a different way, confirms the protestant's assertion, that all Churches are independent of Rome and the Romish bishop. Ignatius writes to them in the same independent tone which appears in his Epistles to other Churches; and, in one place particularly, speaks of the joint founders of that Church, in a way which is certainly inconsistent with the view of their successors being invested with a similar character. He had been desiring their prayers for him in his approaching trial; and he adds, "I do not *command* you as if I were Peter or Paul; they were apostles." Would he, who of all writers, ancient or modern, most insists on the authority of the Christian ministry, in all its gradations, have neglected here to remind the Romans of the character of their bishop, if it were different from his own? Could he have failed to allude to the infallible authority that still abode with them, if there were any, since that of Peter and Paul?

Object of that Epistle.

The author of this Epistle soon after suffered martyrdom in the Coliseum at Rome; and the chief object of sending the Epistle before him, appears to have been to prevent any rash attempt on the part of the Christians there to rescue him. Any turbulent or disobedient spirit, which might have been thus displayed in the capital of the empire, would of course have been tenfold more dangerous to the furtherance of the Gospel, in awakening the suspicions of the Gentile government, than any thing which might take place elsewhere. The Epistle was admirably adapted to accomplish this; and the warm expressions which it contains, concerning the joys of martyrdom, will not seem unnatural and extravagant, if regarded with this view. A cold appeal to the prudence of his brethren at Rome would, with the strong excitement of feeling which his case produced amongst them, have been scarcely listened to. To desert the holy man from prudential motives, might have seemed to them mean and dastardly. It was requisite to represent the fate that threatened him, as not only good and glorious, but absolutely pleasurable. This is the spirit of all Ignatius's Epistles, but most of all, of that in which it was most needed.

His remonstrance was, perhaps, not misplaced; for the fact, that his remains were gathered up, as if from a melancholy effort to find some safe way of testifying their regard, seems to indicate, that unless precaution had been used, some imprudent attempt to rescue him might have been made.

THE CHURCH AT ALEXANDRIA.

To these notices of the primitive Churches of Jerusalem and Rome, it would be desirable to add some account of the Church of Alexandria; as its influence on the character of the Christian world was certainly not less than that of either of the preceding. But it would be impossible to introduce such a history of it, as would be at once useful, and compatible with the scheme of this inquiry. At the same time, it may not be improper to remind the reader, of the several allusions which have been already made to the corrupt tendency of this Church from the earliest times; and to state briefly, that out "of the false knowledge" cultivated here, proceeded directly, or indirectly, nearly all the heresies of the first ages.[86] To this day, indeed, remains may be traced in the Christian world, of the false and fatal notions which took their rise in Alexandria; and Christians and divines have not yet ceased to find Christianity in Plato, and to regard his metaphysical speculations on the nature of the Deity, as glimpses of revelation; or at least, as anticipations of Divine truths, which they know not how to attribute to mere human ingenuity. And it must be confessed, that some of the metaphysical views, which, from time to time, have been taken of the doctrine of the Trinity, display a coincidence with Plato's system, too minutely exact to have been accidental. To one who adopts them, the conclusion must be unavoidable, that either Plato's knowledge was derived from inspiration, or that Christianity was derived from Plato. But we "have not so learned Christ."

Its corruption.

SCHOOLS, CATECHISTS, AND CATECHISMS.

We are contemplating the primitive Church in the performance of its office of dispensing the revelation recorded and intrusted to its keeping; and we have seen it, with this object in view, interweaving the holy Scriptures into the stated service of God; main-

[86] Melancthon's assertion, that all the early Fathers were more or less infected with Platonism, is not without some foundation. "Statim post Ecclesiæ auspicia, per Platonicam Philosophiam Christiana doctrina labefactata est. Ita factum est, ut, præter canonicas Scripturas, nullæ sint in Ecclesia sinceræ literæ. Redolet philosophiam quicquid omnino commentariorum extat."—*De libero arbitrio*, inter *Locos Communes*. Mosheim arrives nearly at the same conclusion in his "Dissertatio de turbata per recentiores Platonicos Ecclesia." An exposure of Origen's Platonism may be found in Paganinus Gaudentius, "De Comparatione dogmatum Origenis cum philosophia Platonis." Mr. Daillé, in his severe censure of the Fathers, has avowedly spared Origen, from a feeling, it would seem, that those who have exposed his errors, were themselves infected with the like; "neque dissimulandum est, eos qui adversus Origenem scripserunt, non fuisse in his disputationibus tanta felicitate versatos, ut, dum hujus errores oppugnant, in nullos ipsi occurrerint." —*De vero Usu Patrum*, p. 265.

taining a separate order of men for officiating, and for interpreting, as well as for reading this record; and also employing them in offering the truths it contains to strangers and the heathen, as well as to the brethren.

But the Church's trusteeship was, to a certain extent, discretionary. Its first duty was thus to afford to all, access to the Word of God, as God gave it; its next, to resort to every method of communicating that Word, which should render it in each case most intelligible or acceptable. The unconverted would require to be addressed in a different form from the Christian already instructed; and, among both converted and unconverted, there would exist an endless variety of intellectual habits and capacities, which would require the truths of the Gospel to be shaped accordingly.

The great body of those, then, to whom Gospel truths were addressed, are commonly divided into two classes; the catechumens, or those who were preparing by an appointed course of instruction (κατήχησις) for baptism; and the *fideles* (πιστοί,) or complete Christians (τέλειοι).

Mode of instructing the confirmed Christians.

With respect to the latter, the Gospel truths were dispensed, not only as they were found in Scripture, but systematically arranged in Sermons, in Creeds, and in other formulas of religious instruction. For the purpose of conveying scriptural truth by these channels, either more compendiously, or more in accordance with the previous knowledge or general pursuits of those addressed, technical terms were introduced; which, although not occurring in Scripture, might represent certain doctrines contained there. The word *Trinity* may serve to illustrate what is here meant.

The Catechists.

The duties of catechist, or instructor of these catechumens, appear to have been discharged occasionally by all the orders of the ministry, from the bishop to the lowest deacon. To avoid scandal, the female catechumens were generally taught by that ancient order, the deaconesses, or widows; of which mention has been formerly made, and of whose original appointment this was probably the main reason.[87]

The Deaconesses.

The first instruction probably Historical.

The candidates for baptism went through a course of instruction suited to each; but in what their catechism generally consisted, we know no further than that the sum of it was repentance and faith. In what it would naturally consist, as contrasted with the after instruction of the mature Christian, is a question on which it is not difficult to decide. The original and primary character of the Gospel scheme is *historical*; and the first office of its original preachers, accordingly, that of witnesses to facts. An historical account of the events of the sacred record would therefore seem,

[87] See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book II. Ch. XXII. Sec. 9. Agreeably to this view, the African Churches, in the decree of the Council of Carthage, specify among the qualifications of a deaconess, "Ut possit apto et sano sermone docere imperitas et rusticas mulieres," &c.

almost certainly, to be the appropriate instruction of the catechumen, if we had no clue to guide us beyond the character of the subject to be handled. But this presumption is greatly increased, by comparing it with what actually did take place during the apostolic ministry, in the few instances on record of what approaches nearest to catechetical instruction—the preaching of the apostles and others to an unconverted audience. In St. Paul's address to the Jews at Jerusalem, and to the Gentiles at Athens, his teaching is strictly of this character; and that this did not arise from any peculiar habit of composition, is evident from his Epistles, in which quite a different method is pursued. The point has been thought thus much worthy of notice, because it is not unreasonable to believe, that if the custom of so teaching Christianity to the young and the unlearned, were more common, the abstract truths would be more easily and naturally understood, afterwards. Whereas, to begin with these, gives the whole an abstruse and unattractive air to most; and creates a difficulty, in that study which was intended for the humblest capacities.

Advantages of such a method.

Children.

Separate establishments existed for the children of Christians and for the adult catechumens, as might naturally be expected; and the early use of sponsors marks the anxious care of the Church, that provision should be made for preventing in all cases a mere conformity to custom.

Schools.

With regard to the places in which the catechumens received their education and training, although these seem to have been in some instances separate and appropriate, yet in others, the Church, or some part of it, was appointed for this purpose.[88]

It is scarcely possible to pursue, even in imagination, the stages which connect all these simple seminaries of elementary religion with those splendid and elaborate institutions, in which religion and useful learning are now united; and which are among the most powerful instruments employed, by our own Church especially, for dispensing the faith which she has in keeping.

[88] Bingham, Book III. Ch. X. Sec. 4.

CHAPTER V.

How the First Uninspired Church fulfilled its office of conveying DIVINE GRACE.

Of the sacred character of the Christian society, considered as the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and the appointed medium of its operations, it is scarcely possible to speak in language too strong. No peculiarity of the New Testament is more striking, than the continual and anxious endeavour of the sacred writers to awaken and cherish a sense of it. As portions of this holy building, as members of this society beloved of God, the Christians received from their Lord his one new commandment, "to love one another." All the zeal of the great Apostle of the Gentiles to teach and preach and enlarge this society, was at the same time directed towards obtaining from every Church an acknowledgment and testimony of this, in the specific pledge of alms for the needy brethren of Judæa. St. John's favourite theme is this holy love; and if more of the inspired preachers had left their teaching on record, this, doubtless, would have been a characteristic prominent in all their writings.

John xiii. 34; xv. 12, 17.

Sacramental duties of the Church Ministers.

It was a high and holy office which the Church had to execute in preserving inviolate the recorded revelation: it was a duty no less honourable and anxious, which it was appointed to discharge, in dispensing this intrusted blessing, so that mankind should receive the greatest possible benefit from it. But higher and holier, perhaps, was this its priestly office—its sacramental character—its duty of perpetually communicating to new countries and successive generations, the gift which it immediately received from Christ, and of which it was the appointed medium for ever. The acts which constituted these means were, of course, to be the essential badges of the society; and without them that society might have preserved the Bible, and distributed its contents, but would not have been a Christian Church. What these means are, all know. They are all those outward observances in which Christians meet to celebrate their whole spiritual communion with Christ and with each other; but especially those which are distinguished by specific Divine institution—the sacraments, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Not that to them alone belongs a sacramental character; for it is evident, that if only these observances were perpetuated, the

Why Baptism and the Lord's Supper are specifically Sacraments.

grace of God, which is promised to prayer, for instance, would want the external sign, and would not therefore be enjoyed. Baptism and the Eucharist are specifically sacraments, because the *precise form in each is to a certain extent prescribed;* and, therefore, the communication of grace is attached to one unalterable ceremonial. But if, according to our Saviour's promise, "Where two or three are gathered together, there He is in the midst," all the religious meetings of Christians are means of grace; the Church itself, in the celebration of its union as the temple of the Holy Ghost, is sacramental. No specific form, beyond the necessary parts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, claim this character; but then, there is a grace generally necessary to salvation appointed to be conveyed through prayer and other observances, although the exact description of these observances be left to the discretion of the Church.

Matt. xviii. 20.

What is now to be considered, therefore, is the mode in which the primitive Church celebrated these rites and ceremonies.

CHRISTIAN RITES.

Their distribution.

The rites and observances of the Church may be classed under a twofold division; the one part of which would contain those through which Divine grace is conveyed to individuals, as such, or as filling individual offices. Of which kind are the ceremonies of Ordination, Confirmation, &c. The other portion, under which the Sacraments would fall, comprises those which relate to Christians in their common Christian character. Besides the Sacraments, are the Public Prayers, the Marriage and Funeral ceremonies, and the like. Both classes have been stated to be modes of intercourse with Him who has promised to be in the midst of us, whenever two or three are assembled together as his people. So far the ceremonies of the Church are all of the same character, and, as means of promised grace, are so far sacramental But, in a further view, an important distinction occurs. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are fixed institutions, and grace is attached to the observance of these specific means: in the others, the means are of the Church's appointment, and the grace bestowed, although requiring *some* means, is yet not specifically attached to any.

All but the two Sacraments may vary in form.

But another difference obtains, which, although not quite so obvious, is scarcely less important and characteristic. One common object is sought in all these acts of Christian celebration—communion with Christ, participation of his Spirit. But we are not styled in Scripture *individually*, but *collectively*, the temple of the Holy Ghost, the abode of the Spirit; and as members of that well compacted body we receive it. Now it has been already more than once pointed out, that Christians are not one society; but many societies founded on the same principles. Each of these societies celebrates within itself the rites and ceremonies which are to unite

it with Christ, and to preserve his Spirit among all its members Each Church, accordingly, may lawfully observe distinct *forms of prayer*, and distinct modes of appointment. It may do so, at least, to a very great extent. And as each Christian society thus holds communion with God in its own way, so does each member partake of that communion, as a member of his particular society or Church. With respect to the *Sacraments*, however, the case is not exactly so. Our act of communion here is performed, not as members of any one particular Church, but as members of the great Christian body—as belonging to the elect, the sanctified, the redeemed. The duties imposed on us by our religious condition in this respect, may admit of illustration from the necessities imposed on us by our natural condition. It is necessary to the wellbeing, and to the very existence, of each separate people or association of men, that they should use some language; although the variety of languages may be infinite, which will effect the end desired. This is analogous to the means of grace, not specifically, but generally required, and used by each Church in its own way. Again, it is necessary to the existence of every individual of the human race, that at certain intervals, he should recruit his body by sleep. Here is a necessity, to which he conforms, not after the fashion of any one nation, not as attached to any one society, but in obedience to an invariable and universal law. To this answers the Christian's duty of celebrating the Sacraments. They are specifically appointed as means of grace, and therefore are means of grace for all: all other ceremonies are means of grace for the members of the particular society which adopts them.

Why the Sacraments must be uniformly the same.

Of course these remarks, as far as they relate to the Sacraments, apply only to such portion of those rites as is recorded to be of our Lord's appointment. In Baptism it is the use of water, and of the prescribed form of words, which denotes the transfer to the baptized of all privileges claimed by the people of God. In the Lord's Supper, it is the symbolical use of the bread and wine, and the accompaniment of the words with which our Lord taught us to accompany it. Our inquiry, then, is into the practice of the primitive Church with respect to the Sacraments and other Rites.

Limitation of this rule

BAPTISM.

Of the continual and invariable use of water in Baptism, by the immediate successors of the apostles, it may be proof enough to state, that the remains of the latter end of the second and third centuries are so unequivocal and full on the exclusive employment of the symbol, that no doubt can be entertained of the custom never having ceased. There is a passage in *The Shepherd* of Hermas, however, which, to those especially who rank him among the apostolical Fathers, may be cited as contemporary evidence. In his *Similitudes*, (XIX. 16,) he expressly speaks of the "water of bap-

Water always used

tism," and in his *Visions* he alludes to it under the image of the Church floating in a mystic water.[89] Whether immersion only was the mode of using this sacramental symbol, is a question which need not detain the inquirer, since he will doubtless, in conformity with certain principles already established, perceive at once, that to such a departure from apostolic custom as may be supposed to exist in sprinkling, rather than in immersing the candidate, the discretionary authority of any Church clearly extends.

And the Invocation of the Trinity.

Not so with respect to the form of words, so solemnly prescribed by Christ himself; in strict accordance with which are all the earliest notices of the baptismal service. Its literal adoption by the first uninspired Church is inferred on grounds similar to those on which we assert the invariable use of the symbol of water. It is mentioned by Tertullian and a succession of writers who lived within too short a distance of this period to make its intermission at all probable;[90] and there is a testimony perhaps still earlier, that of the author of Clement's *Recognitions*, who undoubtedly alludes to it, when he speaks of persons "baptized in the name of the threefold Mystery;[91] and, again, of the ceremony being performed "by invoking the name of the blessed Trinity."[92] In the *Apostolical Canons* an express prohibition against departure from it is found; which serves to mark the early attempts of heretics and innovators to corrupt and change the words prescribed. Menander is, perhaps, the earliest who is directly charged with this attempt, which has been also urged against the Montanists, Sabellians, and other heretical sects.

The object of these inquiries is Historical.

Let it be clearly understood, that the object of this and of similar inquiries into the practice of the primitive Church, is not to maintain the correctness of *our* Church, or of *any* Church, the practices of which coincide with these: the object is strictly historical; the mere statement of facts, without always inquiring what specific use those facts may serve. It is enough that they are truths; and truths seldom remain long unemployed and unprofitable. As to the practices themselves, we should be equally bound to observe them, whether the primitive Church observed them or not, if they are enjoined by Scripture; equally authorized to retain them on our own Church's authority, if not inconsistent with Scripture principles. The primitive Church, in the present view of it, is submitted to a trial on scriptural evidence, such as one generation of fallible beings is ever subject to from another, and such as every Christian generation is required to institute on its predecessors; according to the command, "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

1 Thess. v.21.

It is gratifying, doubtless, to contemplate the genuine spirit of

[89] Vis. III. C. 3. "Quare ergo super aquas ædificatur turris, audi. Quoniam vita vestra per aquam salva facta est et fiet."

[90] Tertullian, de Baptismo, C. 13. Cyprian, Ep. 73. August. de Baptismo, L. VI. C. 25, *et alios.*

[91] Recognit. Lib. VI. C. 9.

[92] Lib. III. C. 67.

Christianity preserved in these early times; and it even adds a natural confidence to decisions founded on independent authority, to find those also the decisions of that generation which was nearest our inspired guides. Still, our inquiry may be free and fearless.

Baptism administered to persons of all ages.

We have satisfactory evidence now, that in the mode of administering the sacrament of baptism, the first uninspired churches fulfilled their trust. Did they equally so in dispensing this necessary medium of God's grace to those for whom it was designed, and by the hands of such as were intended to officiate? We are quite sure from the Scripture, of an authority and duty in the Church to limit baptism to no age; did the primitive societies of Christians act on this principle? Of this there can be no doubt in any candid mind. It is true that infant baptism is not mentioned expressly by an earlier writer than Justin Martyr and Irenæus;[93] for, although the authority of Clement and Hermas are alleged by some learned men, (besides that the testimony of the latter may be disputed on other grounds,) in either, it only amounts to the avowal of opinions, which would seem to be inconsistent with the doctrine of the Anabaptists, and not to an express declaration. But Justin and Irenæus wrote too early[94] to leave it a question, whether during the period between them and the apostolic age, any different regulation existed in this respect. Certainly no allusion is made by him to the novelty of the practice which he records. The primitive Church, like ourselves, was bound to communicate the holy trust, and its first symbol, to every age and sex within reach; and this it doubtless did.

And all persons,

Did it also offer it, as we feel ourselves bound to do, to all degrees of persons, to all ranks and nations? No circumstance, except want of individual preparation, appears to have formed a bar to the admission of candidates into any of the primitive Christian societies; and, as far as that preparation consisted in the acquisition of religious knowledge, every facility for making it was afforded, in the establishment of schools for adults, and in the employment of catechists.

who were fittingly prepared.

There were, doubtless, moral qualifications beyond this, which were insisted on; and for want of these, many were forbidden the Christian privilege. Whole classes of persons were thus excluded, on the ground that their lives and occupations were inconsistent with this preparation; and with such pictures as the heathen historians and satirists give of the imperial city, we can hardly refuse to justify these interdictions, when we find the list proscribed to consist of players, gladiators, &c.[95] At the same time, there is no certain

[93] Lib. II. C. 39.

[94] Justin Martyr is supposed to have written his second "Apology," in which infant baptism is alluded to, A.D. 148. Irenæus was born about A.D. 97, and wrote his book against heresies A.D. 176 or 177. Dodwelli Dissertat. in Irenæum, 3, 4. Justin's testimony is the more important, because he speaks of persons so baptized, who at the time of his writing were at the advanced age of sixty and seventy, and thereby implies the existence of the custom in the apostolic age: πολλοὶ τινὲς καὶ πολλαὶ ἑξηκοντούται καὶ ἑβδομηκοντούται οἱ ἐκ παιδῶν ἐμαθητευθήσαν, κ. τ. λ. Ap. II. p. 64.

[95] See Tacitus and Juvenal, *passim*.

evidence that even this rule was commenced so early as the age of the apostolical Fathers.[96]

By Ministers regularly ordained.

The remarks already made on the institution of a ministerial order, and the evidence that the primitive Church well understood its design, and maintained its appropriate character, render it unnecessary to enter specifically into the question of the persons charged with the performance of the baptismal rite. It was confined, doubtless, as it has been in after times, among all sober Christians, to the ordained ministry, (under the authority of the bishop,[97]) although cases may have occurred in which it was permitted, by the same authority, that it should be performed by a layman. But though David ate of the show-bread, yet the rule which forbade its use by any but the priests, was not thereby abolished; and, such necessary deviations from the fixed course can never rationally be mistaken for the course itself.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Bread and Wine always used.

The essential part of the Eucharist is the symbolical use of bread and wine, according to the recorded institution. A corruption in the celebration of this sacrament might take place in two ways; either by omitting any of that essential part, or by appending to it circumstances inconsistent with its true character. Of both species of corruption we are bound to acquit the primitive uninspired Church.[98] The primitive Christians were guiltless, too, of

[96] The list of the interdicted may be found in the "Apostolical Constitutions," (Lib. VIII. C. 32,) which, although confessedly written at a period very much later than that on which we are now engaged, may be considered as conveying an account of *established* customs; which, in the absence of contrary evidence, have some claim to be assigned to the earliest age. The notes in Cotelerius's edition of the apostolical Fathers deserve to be consulted.

As the authority of the "Apostolical Constitutions" will depend much on the date which we assign to their composition, it may be proper to add, that the earliest author who mentions the work is Eusebius, in his "History," Lib. III. C. 25, (unless, indeed, we suppose the "Apostolical Canons" to have been written before;) but, as Eusebius mentions them among spurious works in circulation, the fact seems to imply that they must have been long in existence. For, had they been a forgery of Eusebius's day, the author of them would probably have been known to him, and therefore have been exposed. Their continued interpolation, even to a subsequent period, is possible and likely.

[97] Ignat. Ep. ad Smyrn. C. 8.

[98] The addition of *water* to the sacramental elements, of which occasional mention is made, might have been in conformity with the general custom of drinking wine diluted. Still, it seems strange, that the setting on the table separately both water and wine should be so specifically noticed. Witness Justin Martyr, (Apol. II. p. 97:) *προσφέρεται τῷ προεστῶτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἄρτος, καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος καὶ κράματος*: and again, *ἄρτος προσφέρεται καὶ οἶνος καὶ ὕδωρ.* Accordingly the expressions made use of in Irenæus to denote that the bread and wine were prepared for distribution, are "*quando mixtus calix et fractus ponis.*" (Lib. V. C. 4.) The Greek Church retains the custom to this day, and adds warm water. Possibly the custom may have been thus scrupulously observed by many, from a desire to express more exactly the precious blood-shedding which took place on the cross, and which was not, it may be observed, an effusion of blood alone but of water and blood. That this circumstance should have been so dwelt on will hardly be wondered at, when we consider the solemn manner in which St. John delivers his testimony to the fact: "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." (John xix. 34, 35.) T

the conversion of this peculiar mean of grace into a rite common to the Jewish and the Pagan religions. Towards this it was that the current of prejudice ran strongest. In this most solemn act of the new religion there must have been a perpetual craving, both in Jewish and Gentile converts, to recognise a substitute for the altar and the repeated *sacrifice*. It was a diseased appetite for a forbidden object, which idolatrous habits had created in the one, and real piety perhaps in the other, and which could only be corrected gradually. Looking back upon the scene, with our experience of the actual corruptions which thence arose, we may be disposed to censure even the concessions (trifling as they were) which these primitive rulers and preachers made; we may be disposed to wish, that they had never ventured to call the Lord's table an altar, or the bread and wine a sacrifice. But that they did it innocently, no one can doubt, who merely reads the few remains of those writers who have employed this language, and finds so little fondness, so plain an aversion, to dwell on any circumstance of pomp connected with the Christian ceremonies. They could hardly be expected to foresee the extent of mischief, which afterwards connected itself with these innocent, inadvertent attempts, "to be all things to all men." The original use of those terms was certainly not as appropriate names, but as figurative expressions, to illustrate their subject.

Figurative language respecting it.

The principles of the Church's establishment, as recorded in Scripture, and the practical application of those principles, as displayed in the ministry of their inspired predecessors, were all too recent and fresh on their minds, for any question to arise concerning the *persons* who were entitled to this great Christian privilege—the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Among the essential distinctions between the old and the new dispensations of God, no one was more prominent than that the former admitted of different classes among those whom it embraced, and of different degrees of privilege and communion, for the Jew, for the proselyte of righteousness, and for the devout Gentile: while in the latter, the partition wall had been thrown down, the veil had been rent. Against this act of uniformity, then, which had been so carefully preserved by the apostles, in their preaching and their practice, they were not likely to offend. To have reserved any participation of the Eucharist for the ministers alone, or for any one privileged class of believers, would have been too manifest a violation of this great principle; whatever temptation might present itself in the prejudice of Jew

Administered to all Christians.

the same circumstance, perhaps, his words in his first Epistle may refer: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water alone, but by water and blood." (Chap. v. 6.) St. John is the only evangelist who has recorded the flowing of water and blood from our Lord's side; and it is somewhat remarkable, that he is also the only one who has recorded "the beginning of miracles," the conversion of water into wine at Cana. (John ii. 1, 2.) Had the miracle any meaning connected with the fact which he so pointedly attests, and if so, what was that meaning?

and Gentile in favour of an officiating minister, who should remind them of a priest.[99] All were not only admitted equally, but all were invited, to partake of this act of communion; and, indeed, it was long thought to be inconsistent with a Christian's profession to be otherwise than a regular communicant.[100]

By ordained Ministers.

The administration of this sacrament, as well as of baptism, was limited to the ordained ministry, who officiated by authority derived from their bishop.[101] That any difference of administration, such as now obtains, between the priests' and deacons' office, had its origin so early, cannot be asserted. Justin Martyr[102] speaks of the distribution of the bread and wine as belonging to the deacons' office; and in the Apostolical Constitutions, the direction given is, that the bread be delivered by the bishop, and the wine by the deacon.[103]

Communion of the sick.

Whether the custom of sending a portion of the consecrated elements to the absent and sick, or that which is still preserved in our own Church, of performing the service in the chambers of the sick, was so early established, is likewise uncertain. With respect to this latter custom, that it is of great antiquity at least, is undoubted; nor can any objection be urged against its lawfulness. Still, it deserves to be considered, whether erroneous notions and superstitious feelings have not been very generally fostered through this practice. The Eucharist celebrated in private, and amongst a few attendants on a sick bed, ceases to be looked on in its true light, as an act of the Christian congregation, celebrating its union, as such, with Christ, and within itself. Its celebration under circumstances which thus obscure its most prominent characteristics, may cause weak minds to attach, almost unconsciously, the notion of a *charm*, to the ceremony. It may, accordingly, be often desired and demanded, as if it possessed a talismanic influence on the dying, and was indispensable to the safe exit of the Christian. It is not so much on habitual communicants that this feeling can operate mischievously; it is on those who either never communicating, or not being in habitual communion, reserve this one act of conformity, for the season of sickness or of death. To persons under such circumstances, a visiting minister's exhortation to receive the Eucharist is surely misplaced. It might be better, perhaps, even to dissuade such an one from his purpose, if he desired it. It is scarcely a time for the stricken sinner in this manner to attempt reparation of his former neglect. For that neglect, he should be instructed to pray to God for forgiveness, among the sins which he shall then specifically confess to him; and to resolve, that if it shall please God to restore him to the assemblies of his saints on earth,

99 Ἱερεύς.

100 The Apostolical Canons, Can. 10, direct that absentees from communion shall be amenable for their neglect. So, too, the council of Antioch, A.D. 340.

101 Ignat. Ep. ad Smyrn. C. 8.

102 Apol. II. p. 27.

103 Constitut. Ap. Lib. VIII. C. 13.

there, where alone it is strictly appropriate, to begin and to continue the observance of the special rite of Christian communion.[104]

AGAPÆ, OR LOVE FEASTS.

Among the acts of communion which Christians celebrated as members, not of particular Christian societies, but of the whole Christian body, the *Agapæ*, or Feasts of Love, require some mention. Agreeing so far in their character with the Lord's Supper, they seem to have had some further connexion with the celebration of this sacrament; and, accordingly, to have been held, either immediately before, or immediately after, the communion service. As this primitive custom is less familiar to us now than those which have been perpetuated to our own age, some fuller consideration of it may not be unacceptable.

Celebrated after the Lord's Supper, and supplied from the oblations,

It was usual for Christians to add to the celebration of the Lord's Supper a frugal meal, of which all the communicants partook. This Love Feast, as it was named, was furnished out of oblations, which it was customary, as now, for the congregation to make; part being set aside for the clergy fund, the remainder was employed in providing this common table.

in the House of Prayer.

That this remarkable custom was not merely a charitable provision for the poor, supplying them with an occasional meal at the expense of their more affluent brethren, nor any display of ordinary social feeling, may be inferred from the circumstance, that it was celebrated in the house of prayer, and connected with the most solemn portion of Divine service. For meetings, the object of which was the relief of hunger, or social relaxation, some other time and place would more properly have been chosen. "What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in?" (writes St. Paul to the Corinthians,) "or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not?" "If any man hunger, let him eat at home." The union, indeed, of charity and social feeling with its religious object, (whatever that object was,) may be admitted, and would be by no means inconsistent with it. It would rather remind us of that similar union of miracle and mercy, which was conspicuous throughout the Saviour's dealings with mankind. But the exercise of charity or social feeling could not have been the only or the principal thing designed. The early Fathers speak of it as an aposto-

1 Cor. xi. 22, and 34.

[104] Bishop Burnet represents the introduction of the custom into the Church of England, as an innocent substitute for the superstitious practice of sending portions of the Eucharist to the chambers of the sick. "It was also appointed, that the sacrament should be given to the sick, and not to be sent from the Church, but consecrated by their bed-sides; since Christ had said, that where two or three were assembled in his name, he would be in the midst of them. But," adds he, "it is too gross a relic of the worst part of popery, if any imagine, that after an ill life, some sudden sorrow for sin, with a hasty absolution, and the sacrament, will be a passport to heaven, since the mercies of God in Christ are offered in the Gospel only to those who truly believe, sincerely repent, and do change the course of their lives."—Abridged History, Book II.

Antiquity of this custom.

lical rite;[105] and the same may be inferred from some allusions in St. Paul's Epistles,[106] and still more certainly from a passage in the Epistle of Jude. It is enough, however, to know that the rite was generally observed by the immediate successors of the apostles, and on the alleged authority of apostolical precedent.

Jude 12.

Remarkable connexion of these Feasts with certain Scriptural Phraseology.

Its most remarkable feature, was its apparent connexion with an important object of faith. It will readily occur to all, that the terms in which the Holy Ghost and its operations are described in Scripture, are all figurative—"Light," "Life," "the Spirit," and "the Holy Spirit." So, too, the change effected thereby in the Christian's condition is called "regeneration," or "a new birth." He is termed "a new man after God, which is created in righteousness," "a new creature," and the like. The reason of this is obvious. The ideas to be conveyed were altogether new, and new or borrowed terms were, therefore, required to express them.

Eph. iv. 24.

2 Cor. v. 17.

At the same time, the ideas so conveyed are intelligible enough for our purpose. We are taught by all these various expressions, (and the *variety* of expression seems designed to prevent a *literal* interpretation of any one,) that the effect of the Holy Ghost's descent has been, not merely increased assistance from God, but, as it were, a constitutional change in man; the addition of some abiding principle which belonged not to his original nature;—as far as it is connected with the fruits of righteousness, having a common object with conscience, but more certain and effectual; even "God working within us to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is

Phil. ii. 13.

[105] See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book XV. Chap. VII. Sec. 6. Ignatius mentions the rite, Ep. ad Smyrn. Sec. 8; and in Tertullian there is a full account of it. Apol. C. 39.

[106] In the passage particularly referred to, (1 Cor. xi. 17,) in which he is charging the Corinthians with profaning the Sacrament, by mingling with it indecent revelling, his words certainly seem to imply the existence of some meal, connected indeed with the celebration of the Eucharist, but more of a meal than is perhaps consistent with any supposable mode of distributing and partaking of the consecrated elements. There is another passage in the same Epistle which probably points to it, chap. v. ver. 11. In directing the Corinthians to pass sentence of excommunication on an incestuous member, he enumerates several crimes besides, for which the offender ought to be punished by the Church with complete excommunication,—total exclusion from all, even the slightest act of communion as Christians; "with such an one," he writes to bid them "not even to eat." This is, very probably, an allusion to the *Agapæ;* because excommunication or exclusion from any society, as a rightful act of the society, can only extend to exclusion from those privileges and exercises which the members share *as members of that society*, and no further. And, besides, the social intercourse of the table would hardly be characterised as the least of all *ordinary* intercourse; although it may very well be considered as the slightest act of Christian communion.

Another passage may be quoted from St. Paul's writings, as apparently containing an allusion to the existence of this rite in the very earliest stage of the Christian establishment. It is his account of St. Peter's behaviour at Antioch, during the attempt of the Judaizing faction there, to enforce on the Gentile converts the observance of the Mosaic law. (Epistle to the Galatians, chap. ii.) "Before," says he, "that certain came from James, he did *eat with the Gentiles;* but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." It is certainly possible that St. Paul may be here speaking only of the ordinary intercourse of hospitality; but, as this act is specified, as the main token by which St. Peter was supposed to have sanctioned the notion, that an uncircumcised Christian was no *complete* Christian; it is more reasonable to interpret it of some religious intercourse.

called "Life," then, because of the analogy between the imparting of this new element of goodness, and the original creation of Adam, with which it is sometimes contrasted. So St. Paul, "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit." "In Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive." It is called "Light" too, because of its use in guiding us from error into "the way of life;" or, perhaps, in allusion to that holy light in which God's people of old were wont to recognise the symbol of the Divine presence. And hence it is written, that "God is light," and, that "if the light that be in us be darkness, how great will be that darkness." Hence, too, the precept, "Let your *light* so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It is also called *Spirit*, because it is God unseen, unfelt; or rather, because it is God worshipped no longer in connexion with any visible symbol, or holy dwelling-place; neither at Jerusalem (as the Lord told the Samaritan woman,) nor yet on Mount Gerizim, but in "*spirit* and in truth." "The wind (πνεῦμα) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the *Spirit*." (πνεύματος.)

1 Cor. xv. 22, 45.

1 John i. 5.
Matt. vi. 23.
Matt. v. 16.

John iv. 21, 24.
John iii. 8.

Among the terms adopted to express this new relation between God and man, is ἀγάπη; which in our Bible translation is rendered sometimes *love*, and sometimes *charity*, apparently without any rule for the difference of translation. It is called love; yet it is not, strictly speaking, love. The word wanted, was one to express the benevolent relation of God to man, and the corresponding disposition of man to God, in this his last mode of manifestation; as residing no longer in a temple or holy city, but in that figurative temple, of which we are the constituent parts; which has been "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit."[107] Some word was wanted, in short, to express that particular kind of devotional feeling towards God, as filling this his final dwelling-place with his glory, which the Israelite felt when he trod the courts of the house of God, or at the hour of prayer looked on it from afar, or turned his face to the quarter of the heavens in which it stood. That associated love,

Christian Love explained.

[107] Hence we find this in the second century among the elementary truths professed by the catechumens at their baptism. Tertull. de Bapt. C. VI.: "Cum sub tribus et testatio fidei et sponsio salutis pignorentur, necessario adjicitur Ecclesiæ mentio; quoniam, ubi tres, id est, Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, ibi Ecclesiæ, quæ suum corpus est." And, accordingly, it is among the articles of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost,—the holy Catholic Church,—the communion of saints"—of which clauses "the communion of saints" was not added until the fourth century; probably, when the preceding expression ceased to be generally understood, and the truth conveyed by it required a new mode of enunciation.—See Eph. ii. 20—22.

Ps. xxvi. 8; cxxxvii. 5. with which the old worshipper of God was wont to exclaim, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning;" that associated love was to be transferred to a society made the new "habitation of God through the Spirit;" and this was expressed by the term ἀγάπη.

Eph. ii. 22.

Connexion between the Love of God and of Man.

In this secondary application of the word, then, it may be interpreted to mean, either the disposition of God to man, as dwelling in him by the Holy Spirit; or, the corresponding feeling of man to God in that relation. And as this spirit of love, which He hath given, (1 Tim. i. 14,) becomes ours only as members of a society, the Christian's endeavour to preserve and cherish this holy union is necessarily connected with his social behaviour as a Christian, and is, in short, the main principle of it. Hence the continual blending in the Scripture precepts, of the command to love God and our brethren, as if it were one and the same thing; *e.g.* "He that loveth God, loveth his brother also." "He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." "Every one that loveth is born of God." "He who seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" In some of them this interpretation is suggested by the peculiar mode of expression; as in the last, in which the love of God is spoken of, according to the phrase so often applied to the Holy Spirit, as "dwelling in us." The same may be observed of that which describes the being born of God as the effect of loving; the Scripture language elsewhere being, that we are "so born of water and of the Spirit."

1 John iv. 20, 21; iii. 14; also iv. 7; iii. 17.

John iii. 5.

Use of the term Love by our Saviour,

It was from our blessed Lord's discourses that this (as many other terms) of the inspired writers, appears to have acquired its secondary meaning. Among many passages may be noticed especially that in which He tells his disciples, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you;" and, again, his prayer to the Father for Christians in all ages, "That they all may be one;" prayed He, "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst *me* before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that

John xv. 9.

John xvii. 21.

the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." This passage is given at length, because the particular use of the term is only apparent from the context; as, for instance, in the last verse, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them," is a form of expression cast in the same mould with one of the preceding sentences, "The glory that thou gavest me I have given them," by which, no doubt, the gift of the Holy Spirit was intended, agreeably to the sacred language, in which the term glory is made to signify any manifestation of the Divine nature.

And by the Apostles.

The apostles, accordingly, continually employ the word in a way which can scarcely be explained but by such a reference as this. We read of the "love of the Spirit," of "love in the Spirit," of "faith working by love," of "the love of God being *shed abroad* in our hearts," (another coincidence with the ordinary language which describes the gift of the Spirit,) of "the edifying in love;" and the apostolical blessing is, that "the God of love may be with us."

Rom. xv. 30; Col. i. 8; Gal v. 5, 6 Eph. iv. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

By St. Paul.

Of St. Paul's writings, the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians may be selected, as furnishing the most striking instance of the use of the word by him. The topic (as he expressly tells us) is spiritual gifts; and in discussing this, he contrasts the *extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit, with ἀγάπη, or charity; meaning by this latter, as it is plain, the ordinary influence of the Spirit; and declares, that it was this, and not the former, out of which arose the moral qualifications of a Christian—that the gifts of miracle, of prophecy, and of tongues, were useful for the planting of Christianity, but this for the salvation of the possessor. Hence, too, he speaks of it as "never failing," as "abiding;" whereas the extraordinary operations were to cease or fail. This was the permanent gift, the efficacy of which was to go further than its accompaniments, faith and hope; greater than faith, and greater than hope; because it is even from this principle that the Christian "believeth all things, hopeth all things." "And now *abideth* these three," (*abideth*, as opposed to the extraordinary graces of the early Church, of which he had been speaking,) "faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these is charity."[108]

By St. John

In no part of the New Testament, however, is the peculiar use of this term so striking, as in St. John's writings. "That God is

1 John iv.

[108] Compare 1 Corinthians xiii. with Galatians v. 19, and the correspondence between, what is called in the one the result of ἀγάπη, and in the other the fruits of the Spirit, will be apparent. The following scheme will serve to show the main coincidences.

Characteristics of ἀγάπη, from 1 Corinthians xiii.	Fruits of the Spirit, from Galatians v.
I. Μακροθυμεῖ, πάντα ὑπομένει.	I. Μακροθυμία.
II. Χρηστεύεται.	II. Χρηστότης.
III. Πάντα πιστεύει.	III. Πίστις.
IV. Οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.	IV. Χαρά.
V. Οὐ παροξύνεται.	V. Πραότης.
VI. Οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν.	VI. Ἀγαθωσύνη. κ. τ. λ.

love," and that "if we love one another God dwelleth in us," is the thought, that entwines itself into all he writes, whether narrative or precept. To "the beloved" is his habitual form of address. When he describes what St. Paul would call "neglecting the gift within thee," the language is, "Thou hast left thy first love;" faith in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is called by him, "believing the love that God hath in us," and the like. And accordingly it is said of him that, when incapable of preaching and teaching any longer, his only exhortation used to be, "Little children, love one another."

Rev. ii. 4.

No one passage in his writings is more remarkable than the fourth chapter of his First Epistle. "No man," writes he, "hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have known," adds he, "and believed the love that God hath *in us;*[109] God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as *he* is, *so are we in this world.*" Now if we compare the first sentences of this paragraph with a corresponding verse in his Gospel, what has been asserted of his meaning will, perhaps, be more evident. In the Gospel, when he is giving an account of the manifestation of God in Christ, his language is, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him." In the Epistle, when he is dwelling on the manifestation of God by the Spirit, he writes, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth *in us*, and his love is perfected *in us;*"[110] following it up by the several expressions already quoted, all conveying the same truth, that this manifestation is made by God's Spirit *in us* as a society; and it is this union, and the feelings arising out of it, which constitute the love of which he writes —that love which God hath *in us;* God being love.[111]

1 John iv. 12, 13, 16, 17.

Compared with a passage in his Gospel.

John i. 18.

The Agapæ founded on this language.

It can hardly be questioned, that by this use of the term in the language of the apostles, must be interpreted its meaning as applied to that ancient Christian rite, which celebrated the union of Christians as members of Christ—as the common abode of the Holy Ghost. They were called *Agapæ*, and were always appended to the administration of the Sacrament; to intimate, no doubt, the close connexion which, according to Scripture, exists between the

109 Ἐν ἡμῖν. Our translation is, "to us."

110 "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

111 In the long list of errors charged on Peter Lombard, whose works once obtained a place in the divinity studies of all the universities of Europe, to the neglect of Scripture, one noted is, that he identified αγαπὴ with the Holy Ghost. It is by no means my intention to defend his application of the word; but his notion clearly arose from observing that the word was used by the writers of the New Testament in a peculiar sense, and one connected with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. His view is contained in Lib. I. distinct. 17, of the small volume of his works, printed A.D. 1528, and is noticed by Mosheim in his "Elementa Dogmaticæ Theologiæ," p. 68.

Saviour's death and that blessing for which it was expedient he should go away.[112] As by the Eucharist they were reminded more especially of his dying for our sins, so in this kindred ceremony, they commemorated his return and eternal abode with them by his Spirit. It continued to be observed until the middle of the fourth century, when, owing to some abuses in the celebration of it, it was abolished by a decree of the Council of Laodicea.[113]

Abolished in the fourth century.

PUBLIC PRAYERS.

Grace one object of Public Prayer.

The regular observance of public prayer has been already noticed under another head, when it was considered as one means of dispensing the contents of Scripture. But, although this was one purpose which the public liturgies have served in all ages of the Church, yet is it not their chief or most obvious purpose. We assemble in common prayer, as a mode of obtaining that Divine grace, which is promised to us as members of a community; that we may worship in, and be ourselves the temple of the Holy Ghost; which temple is, not the Corinthian Church alone, but every Church in every age. Ignatius's exhortation to the Church of Ephesus proves that the glorious impression of this great truth, made by the inspired teachers on the Christian world, was still fresh and strong. "Make a point," writes he, "of frequently assembling to offer thanksgiving and glory to God; for as oft as you gather together, the powers of Satan are quelled, and his destruction fails, when this your act of faith is as the act of one mind."[114]

No particular form enjoined by Scripture.

There are still extant ancient Liturgies, bearing the names of Apostles and of those who were their contemporaries and fellow-labourers; and although there is internal evidence in these compositions that they were not the production of the authors to whom they are attributed, it would be wrong to assert that there were no such liturgies originally, or that these contain nothing of the originals.[115] The question does not, however, affect the character of our Church services. If we except the Lord's Prayer, no obligation is imposed on any Church to adopt or to retain forms except as convenient; and it was, on this account, we may presume, that no public prayers are left among the materials of sacred record—that each Church, in every age, may be at liberty to form a liturgy for itself. The obligation is to have *some*, but not any one instituted form. Accordingly, the custom of bishops assuming the liberty of composing each his own liturgy, may be traced so far back, as to lead us to a fair presumption that it existed at a period within the limits of the present inquiry.[116]

[112] "The Holy Ghost was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified." "If I go not away the Comforter will not come."

[113] Can. 28, Tom. I. p. 1501, of Labbis' Councils. Its celebration was still, however, permitted in private houses, as appears from Canon 27 of the same Council.

[114] Ep. ad Ephes. C. 13.

[115] Wheatly on the Common Prayer Book. Introduction.

[116] See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book II. Chap. VI. Sect. 2. Palmer's Dissertation on Primitive Liturgies, p. 6.

The Lord's Prayer is mentioned as an exception; for, even though we should suppose that our Lord's purpose in dictating that prayer was not that we should necessarily use it as one of our prayers; still, its suitableness for being so used by all ages and Churches would leave no plea for ever discontinuing its use; and the framing of it by our Lord himself, would of course make its omission, under such circumstances, imply a want of due reverence towards Him. It was unquestionably used by the early Churches in their public liturgies, and its use was considered by many as an indispensable duty.[117]

CERTAIN RITES WHICH FALL INTO A DISTINCT CLASS.

Occasional mixture of Religious and Civil objects in the same Rite.

All religious ceremonies have one sole legitimate object; they are the outward signs and formal acts of communion with God; and with a view to that communion they are all instituted and celebrated. It is true, that the original character of a religious rite may in the course of time be lost, and some different object may be proposed and effected by it. Worldly policy, or any views of present convenience, may so far interfere with the use of it, as to give it a political or otherwise worldly character; but it loses its spirituality in proportion. Not that the two objects are incompatible; but that such is the *risk* incurred by allowing them to be associated. The ceremony of marriage is a religious act; but the same rite is in most Christian nations made likewise to serve as the form of the civil contract; and civil privileges and penalties are made to depend on it. And out of this union, no very serious evil, perhaps, has arisen, to detract from the advantages of the arrangement. Oaths, again, are religious acts; and the more formal and solemn the oath, the more properly is it to be styled a religious ceremony.[118] The convenience of a pledge, which might pass in courts of justice for a sort of coined and stamped truth, and subject him who presented it insincere and adulterated to a penalty, analogous to that attached to forgery,—the convenience of this has been always recognised by the magistrate; and even in heathen countries, a religious ceremony has been adopted as the most appropriate form. In the same manner as men have fixed on gold and silver for money by universal consent, because of some intrinsic attraction in those metals, which attraction afterwards has become a secondary consideration; so it has fared with oaths. They were admired for their holy solemnity, and the hold which they possessed on men's consciences, and, therefore, were chosen for the political purposes which they have been made to

Marriage.

Oaths.

117 See particularly Tertullian, de Oratione, C. 9, and Ap. Constitut. Lib. VII. C. 44.

118 See Burnet's Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, Art. IX. "If we consider the matter upon the principles of natural religion, an oath is an act of worship and homage done to God;" and again, in reference to the prophecy of Jeremiah iv. 2, "here an oath religiously taken is represented as a part of that worship, which all nations shall offer up to God under the new dispensation."

serve. Here, it must be confessed, the experiment has been of a more doubtful result, than in the preceding instance. The great demand for them as a political convenience, has proportionably diminished their religious character, and profaned in some measure that which was holy, and used by the holy.

Whilst some religious institutions are thus adopted into civil societies, on the other hand, a custom of mere human origin may be lawfully converted into an act of communion with God, and incorporated by the Church into the great body of those common rites, to which, generally, a promise of grace is annexed. To which class belong the burial service, the religious part of the ceremony of crowning kings, and the like. Hence, in different ages and countries, the number of sacred rites will be made to differ, or, remaining the same, to change their character. How far their multiplication may be allowed, and to what extent human institutions may borrow spiritual influence, must, of course, be determined by the principles given by Christ and the Holy Spirit, for the formation and regulation of every Church. Only, in the inquiry concerning such rites, it must be borne in mind, that their character is always twofold; and that they are accidentally made the means of grace.

Burial Service.

Such being the character of these rites, it is unnecessary to pursue any further inquiry respecting them. I shall accordingly proceed at once to notice what properly follow the Sacraments, the Love Feasts, and the Public Prayers,—those ceremonies, namely, which are the Church's appointed means of grace for individuals, or for creating particular offices.

ORDINATION, CONFIRMATION, &C.

Ordination.

Of these, the ordination of ministers is the most prominent. In the narrative of the Acts we find no specific direction given for the celebration of such a form; and yet the use of some form is left binding, because it is recorded. Again, although no complete ceremony is recorded, because, doubtless, it was not intended that the Church, in all ages, should be tied down, under all circumstances, even to the apostolical form; still, besides the general appointment of prayers, the laying on of hands was enjoined. This part of the ceremony then must have been recorded, because intended to be perpetual; and, accordingly, in looking back on the view we have left us of the first uninspired Church, we should not expect even to find all Churches necessarily agreeing in their forms of ordination prayers, but we should expect all to use the imposition of hands. If we perceived that any neglected to do so, we should have possession of a fact which would enable us to say, that their proceedings were irregular. But there is no evidence of such a deviation from apostolical practice and scriptural views; and we are therefore bound to suppose, that ordination was still continued by imposition of hands and by prayers.

Confirmation.

Confirmation is another of this class of rites which deserves a short notice. It evidently arose out of the formal act of giving to the new Christian the confirming sign of the real descent of the Holy Ghost on him. After these miraculous manifestations were withdrawn from the Church, this venerable rite was employed as a useful addition to those outward means of grace, through which the Church was appointed to communicate and cherish the ordinary gifts of the Spirit. Although always now blended with forms of common prayer, yet in itself it is an act relating to an individual, and as such has been considered here. Like ordination, its essential ingredient is the laying on of hands, which, accordingly, has been the invariable part of the ceremony from the earliest times. It was long practised in the Church in strict conformity with the apostolic usage, immediately after baptism, whether of infants or adults; and it was, probably, only when the return of sensible manifestations had generally ceased to be expected, that its more rational use was established.

CHAPTER VI.

What Measures the First Uninspired Church Pursued for Self-Preservation.

Besides those measures, the object of which is to preserve or to dispense the recorded revelation, the Church is obliged to provide some especially for its own preservation. Stationed as guard over this Divine treasure, it is required to use all diligence, not only to fulfil its office, but to keep itself strong and healthy, and well equipped for so trying a service. What course the primitive uninspired Christians pursued with this view, is the point of inquiry at which we are arrived.

Dangers of the Primitive Church.

And, in order to estimate the wisdom of their plans and precautions, it will be necessary to connect them with a view of the dangers to which the Church was exposed, and which these provisions may be supposed designed to meet and counteract. These were various and unconnected: some internal, and arising from its own members; some external, and arising from strangers and enemies. In providing against both these, the Church enjoyed the same sort of assistance which guided it in all its other proceedings,—the recorded principles on which the Church was formed, illustrated by the application of those principles in the ministry of the apostles. The uninspired Church was assailed by perils precisely similar to those which it had witnessed successfully opposed, by means still in its power. Within itself it was liable to heresies and schisms, and so had it ever been. From without, it saw danger in the wisdom of the unbelieving portion of mankind, as well as in their power; but the effect of both had been proved. Let us see, therefore, how far it profited by the examples which had gone before.

Erroneous Doctrines.

The first measures of self-preservation adopted by any society would naturally be addressed to its own members; and these, in the Christian society, would have in view one of two things; either the profession of orthodox faith, or conformity to instituted practices. Whenever, then, in the first place, any doctrines of Scripture were likely to be misrepresented, or any unscriptural doctrine likely to be introduced, it would be the Church's care to enforce the true doctrine, and to guard against the false, by some specific appointment: and if any such abuse had actually occurred, its vigilance would be proportionably increased by the warning. It would not necessarily happen that the doctrines thus made prominent, and particularly

guarded, because most exposed, would be in themselves the most important; but any so circumstanced would still have a claim during the season of peril to this accidental preference; as the parent watches more tenderly over the weak child, although intending thereby no mark of preference or distinction to it above its brothers and sisters. The principal method devised by the Church from the earliest times, for thus securing its members against the particular errors of belief, which foresight or experience had taught to be the most dangerous, has been to draw up formularies of faith, Creeds, Canons, Articles, and the like. A Creed, taught to the catechumens before baptism, put them on their guard on those points, whereon they were most likely to be assailed. Read constantly in the public assemblies, it reminded the whole Church, that the doctrines specified were among those, belief in which was implied by their becoming members of that community. Hence the early and original term for creed was σύμβολον, or "watch-word;" which, whether borrowed, as some of the Fathers assert, from military language, or, as others assert, from the signs of recognition in use among the heathen in their mysteries, denotes a test and a shibboleth, whereby each Church may know its own, and is circulated throughout its members as a warning against the snares of enemies or false brethren.

Guarded against by Creeds, &c.

The Apostles' Creed.

That the Church is authorized to set forth Christian doctrines, moulded into systems or into any convenient form, has been already shown; and it has been also asserted, that in the present instance they were probably further sanctioned by apostolic example. Whether any portion of what is called "The Apostles' Creed," was actually so framed and used by the apostles, or not, allusions to the use of similar forms may be, perhaps, discovered in several parts of the New Testament. Even so early as the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip, we know that the profession of one article of faith, specifically, was required; and this, just the one which at that season was most likely to be made prominent: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;"[119] nor is it unreasonable to interpret St. Paul's directions to Timothy, in reference to the use of such specific articles, when he bids him "keep that which is committed to thy trust;[120] avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called; which some professing have erred from the faith:" and again, "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. *That good thing which was committed unto thee*[121] keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

The articles which would originally compose this formulary, would, of course, be few; and this would in some measure render

[119] Acts viii. 37. The same profession was made by Peter to our Lord, in the name of all the apostles, "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."—John vi. 69.

[120] 1 Tim. vi. 20. Τὴν παραακαταθήκην φύλαξον.

[121] 2 Tim. i. 13, 14. Τὴν καλὴν παρακαταθήκην.

it unnecessary that they should be placed on record. But a more powerful reason suggests itself, why, supposing the inspired Church to have made use of such a form, it should not be registered by it. It was systematic divinity, and framed into that systematic form to serve a special purpose, and would therefore have been an anomaly in the sacred record. To have recorded it with the apostolic sanction, would have given it the character and authority of Scripture; whereas it was only an illustration of that use which was to be made of Scripture in all ages.[122] It is, indeed, extremely probable, that a portion of the Apostles' Creed was formed and sanctioned by the apostles, and preserved for a time in the Church solely by tradition, on this very account.[123] The current tradition, that its origin was apostolical, is certainly entitled to some credit; although we may reject with certainty the story of each apostle contributing his quota, and thereby occasioning it to be called a *symbolum*. Indeed, the internal evidence of a certain portion of it corroborates this view so strongly, that it may be worth while to pause and examine the several clauses, with a view to determine which may, and which may not, be of so early a date.

How far probably framed by the Apostles.

Bearing in mind, then, the object which such a formula of faith must have, let us take the first article, *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.* "He that cometh unto God," writes St. Paul, "must believe that he is;" and the same cause which rendered it necessary for the apostle to make prominent this article of belief, no doubt might have occasioned it to be first in an apostolic formula. The whole clause considered together forcibly reminds us, too, of the opening of the book of Genesis, where this supreme and distinct Being is set forth, in opposition to the false notions of the world, as the Creator of Heaven and Earth; of those very things which had furnished the chief objects of idolatry. Perhaps, then, the importance of specifying this great truth may have arisen from the temptations which old prejudice would foster in heathen converts, once more to corrupt religion as did their forefathers. The most ancient Creeds, too, confirm this view, by distinctly marking the unity of God, and thus more strongly cautioning the Christian against polytheism. In those of Irenæus,[124] and of Origen,[125] it is "one God;" and in Tertullian's "one or the only God."[126]

The First Article.

Heb. xi 6.

The Unity of God.

[122] Οὐχ, ὡς ἔδοξεν ἀνθρώποις, συνετέθη τὰ τῆς πίστεως, ἀλλ' ἐκ πάσης γραφῆς τὰ ΚΑΙΡΙΩΤΑΤΑ συλλεχθέντα μίαν ἀναπληροῖ τὴν τῆς πίστεως διδασκαλίαν. S. Cyril, Catech. cited by Bishop Pearson in his Exp. of the Creed, Art. I. notes.

[123] Jerome alludes to the fact, (Ep. ad Psammachium adversus Err. Johan. Hieros. C. 9.) "In symbolo fidei et spei nostræ, quod ab Apostolis traditum, non scribitur in chartâ et atramento, sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus." Other allusions of the same kind may easily, perhaps, be met with in the earlier writings of the Church. Petrus Chrysologus (an author of the fifth century) frequently makes use of language such as this: "Hæc fides, hoc sacramentum, non est committendum chartis, non scribendum literis," &c.—Ser. 57. In Symb. Apost.

[124] Lib. I. C. 2 and 19.

[125] Περὶ ἀρχῶν in Præfat.

[126] "Unum" and "unicum." De Veland. Virg. C. I. De Præscript. adv. Hær. C. XIII. Adv. Praxeam, C. II.

Probably framed against the Gnostics especially.

But a further ground presents itself, for the employment of this article, in the very specific form in which it is now worded, even during the apostolic age. In a former portion of this inquiry, I had occasion to remark, that not only St. John, the latest of the sacred writers, but that St. Paul, too, alludes to the existence of those wild fancies, with which the Gnostic theory was beginning to corrupt the Church. Some brief outline was also given of the general features of this source of extravagant errors. One of the most attractive principles seems to have been that which solved the knotty question of the origin of evil. Among the thirty *Æons*, who occupied the original *Pleroma*, or sphere of pure Deity, *Sophia* (wisdom) was fabled to have produced, through intense desire to comprehend the greatness of the προπάτωρ, or first father, a monstrous birth, *Achamoth*.[127] This marvellous offspring was cast out of the heavenly space, and became the author of matter, and the mother of him whom they described as the Creator of the world, and whose imperfect and corrupt work it had been the province of certain *Æons* to correct. Their scheme of reformation was easily made a counterpart to the history of man's redemption; and, indeed, the foundation story itself seems to have been framed with a similar design against the scriptural account of the fall of man, and the bringing in of sin and death into the world. Harmlessly absurd as all this may seem to us, yet we know that St. Paul and St. John feared lest it might deceive the very elect, and that many Christians were bewildered in their faith by it. Weighing, then, with this view, the exact expression of the first article of the Apostles' Creed, in what period of the Church would it be more naturally framed than in the first? Contrary to these "endless genealogies" and "false oppositions,"[128] it asserts that God is one and indivisible. In opposition to the notion, that the "first father" took no part in the government of the world, but left it to lower emanations, God is called παντοκράτωρ, "all-mighty," or "all-governing;" and the impious fancy of a separate and evil creator, is condemned by the assertion, that it is He who is maker of heaven and earth.[129]

And if so, of Apostolical origin.

[127] Irenæi, Lib. II. C. 10. "Deum impie contemnunt non credentes, quoniam ex his quæ non erant, quemadmodum voluit, ea quæ facta sunt ut essent omnia fecit sua voluntate, quod enim dicunt ex lachrymis Achamoth humectam prodiisse substantiam," &c. Achamoth is a Hebrew word, signifying Wisdom.

Irenæus elsewhere laments the success of the Valentinians, &c., in seducing τοὺς μὴ ἐδραίαν τὴν πίστιν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα διαφυλάσσοντας: and recommends the use of the Creed as a safeguard against these seductions, (see Lib. I. C. 1.) For a full account of these heresies his work may be consulted.

[128] Ἀντίθεσις, meaning, doubtless, the pairing off of the Æons, who were described as coupled, or *set off* in pairs. With reference to the same notion we may interpret an expression in Origen, (Dialog. 2,) when, speaking of the supreme Being, he adds, ὃς πάντων κρατεῖ, ᾧ ἀντίκειται οὐδέν.

[129] Some of the early heretics asserted, that the creation was the work of angels: but, probably, under every variety of expression they meant the same thing substantially, emissions or emanations from the source of all-pervading Deity. See Irenæus, Lib. II. C. 9, and Epiphanius, and Theodoret, as referred to in King's History of the Apostles' Creed, p. 85.

Art. II. *And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.* The Second Article.

That an Article specifying belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, was likely to have been framed by the apostles themselves, may be inferred from the confession of the eunuch to Philip, before alluded to. Perhaps, indeed, the whole of the first clause of this second Article may have stood originally as we now have it; for "that Jesus was the Christ," was, we know, the very terms of that faith for which the Jews threatened their believing brethren with vengeance; and Martha's confession of faith to Jesus himself is substantially the same, differently worded, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." So also Peter's, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Belief in Christ. John ix. 22. Matt. xvi. 16.

No article of the Christian religion could, indeed, have more required an early specification, and peculiar enforcement. The prejudice which it opposed, was the very bed of tares, which sprang around the tender plant of Christianity,—it was the Jewish prejudice; and that, therefore, against which the earliest converts, who were Jews, and living among Jews, would require to be most studiously guarded. The particular clauses which follow, might have been gradually added, as occasion demanded; but this must have been as old as Christianity itself. It is worthy of notice, too, that a change appears in the form of expressing belief in Jesus Christ, not only in the Nicene Creed, but in some other of the oldest Creeds, (as, for instance, in one of Irenæus,) which corresponds with what we should expect in a later period of the apostolic history. It is, "in *one* Lord Jesus Christ:" the addition of the term "one," being obviously rendered afterwards necessary, by the fancies of Cerinthus, and the like, that Christ was, first, the Son of the Demiurgus, and that, secondly, on him one of the thirty *Æons* descended at his baptism, in the shape of a dove.[130] Directed against the very earliest Errors.

To the rise of the Gnostic heresy we may, indeed, attribute the three subsequent clauses, without being able to determine, whether all did or did not belong to the Creed of the apostles' days. They would, certainly, not be inappropriate to the latter portion of that period. That Christ, the Son of God, "was conceived by the Holy Ghost;" that is, in the words of St. Luke, was "called the Son of God," because the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin Mary, and "the power of the Highest overshadowed her," was obviously Son of God. Luke i. 35.

[130] Irenæi, Lib. I. C. 25; and, again, Lib. II. C. 18, where he argues against the notion thus, "Si alter quidem passus est, alter autem impassibilis mansit; et alter quidem natus est, alter vero, in eum qui natus est, descendit, et rursus reliquit eum, non unus sed duo monstrantur."

levelled against this heresy just noticed; so, too, that He "was born of the Virgin Mary," that is, was really man as well as God, and not the Son of the fabled *Demiurgus*; that He "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried," all specify those several particulars which were inconsistent with the union of a superior *Æon* with Christ during his ministry, and his separation from Him on the cross; the favourite speculation of the Docetæ.

Born of the Virgin.

His death.

Correspondence with the early Fathers.

It not a little confirms this view, that we find the earliest Fathers opposing, principally, these very errors, and in similar language. The Creed asserts, that Jesus Christ was "born of the Virgin Mary;" Ignatius, that "He was of Mary truly born,"[131] "truly of the race of David, according to the flesh," "truly born of a Virgin:"[132] and Origen, "that he was born in reality, and not in appearance only." Again, the Creed asserts, that "He suffered under Pontius Pilate;" Ignatius, that "He was really persecuted under Pontius Pilate."[133] In Ignatius we read, that "he really suffered, not as some unbelievers assert, that he suffered only in appearance:"[134] and in Origen, "he suffered in truth," "and not by a phantom."[135]

Origen.

Ignatius.

Descent into Hell.

The descent into hell was certainly not one of the original articles of the Creed; and when used, was first employed only as an equivalent expression for the term "buried," which was omitted.[136] It was afterwards, however, adopted to denote something distinct from it, as both appear in the later creeds; or, what is more probable, the ejected term "buried" was now replaced; and this nevertheless retained, because it contained the expression of a doctrine frequently set forth in the early Fathers, in opposition to the Gnostic heretics. These, according to Irenæus,[137] denied the salvation of the body, and maintained, that "the souls ascended into the heavens, unto their determined place, from whence they shall no more return unto their bodies." So that it might have reference to the real power of death over Christ, as over all men; in opposition to this notion of the reunion of a particle of the Divine essence with its parent source."[138]

Why added.

131 Ep. ad Trall. Sec. 9.

132 Ad Smyrn. Sec. 1.

133 Ad Trall. Sec. 9.

134 Ejusd. Sec. 10.

135 In Procœm. Lib. Περὶ ἀρχῶν. So, too, in the Creed we read, that "He was crucified, dead, and buried," as so many separate scriptural assertions inconsistent with the theory of the Docetæ. The same view is enlarged on by other early writers. "The mere fact of his burial," writes Theodoret, "is sufficient to confute what they (the Docetæ) seek to establish; for it was neither his soul, nor his Divine nature, which was deposited in the grave, but his body, for graves are prepared for bodies." Theodoret, quoted by King, p. 179. So too, Petrus Chrysologus, (in Symb. Serm. 60.) "Sepultum, dicis, ut veram carnem Christi, mortemque non perfunctoriam probet confessio sepulturæ."

The specification of the time, by the expression "under Pontius Pilate," was, doubtless, to destroy the claims of any false pretenders of any other period, such as those alluded to in the speech of Gamaliel, recorded in the Acts, ch. v. 36, 37.

136 In the Creed of the Church of Aquileia; see Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. V.

137 Lib. I. C. 23, and in other passages.

138 The interpretation put on the phrase by the framers of our articles in the reign of Edward VI. was, "that the body of Christ lay in the grave until his resurrection; but his Spirit, which he gave up, was with the spirits which were detained in prison or in hell, and preached to

The rising from the dead, is a point so often specified and made prominent in the preaching and teaching of the apostles, that we should certainly expect to find it in a creed of their composing. Whatever occasioned them so to distinguish the doctrine in their discourses and writings, might be equally good reason for appointing it a place in their formulas of faith. Although witnesses of all Christ's course of ministry, yet we know, that they are in Scripture emphatically called "witnesses of the resurrection;" and the sum of their preaching is described by St Luke, as "Jesus and the resurrection." We plainly gather from Scripture, too, that there was good reason for a particular enforcement of this great doctrine, because it was above all others the one most opposed to the preconceived notions of mankind. The immortality of the soul, as taught by some of the philosophers among the Gentiles, was even inconsistent with a resurrection of the whole man; and of the Jews themselves, perhaps even the Pharisees had not quite comprehended the immortality of man to extend to a bodily resurrection. At all events, that strong bias in the Gentile world, to reject the doctrine as absurd, which caused St. Paul to be mocked at Athens, sufficiently accounts for the introduction of this clause into the earliest Creed. But, besides this need for such an article, it will be remembered, that the Scriptures themselves allude to an error, which was making progress among Christians; a notion, "that the resurrection was past already." These heretics understood the doctrine, it would seem, in a figurative sense, merely as denoting "a new birth unto righteousness," and might have given rise to the clause, or furnished an additional reason for its insertion.

Resurrection.

Acts i. 22; iv. 33. Acts xvii. 18.

2 Tim. ii. 18.

The occasion of the words which follow, and which assert the ascension into heaven, was certainly the heresy of some Marcionites, disciples of Apelles; who introduced a variety in Marcion's view, maintaining that Christ's body, while on earth, was not a phantom, but that after he came down from heaven, he dissolved this earthly body, and created for himself a heavenly one, with which he ascended.[139] Hence, Irenæus, in repeating this article in one of his creeds, expresses it by "the reception into the heavens of Jesus Christ, in the flesh."[140] The addition, too, "sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty," might have been made only in order to express more fully this view of the ascension, and to declare, that he who was born of the Virgin Mary, &c. ascended in the same

Ascension.

Sitting at the right hand of God.

them, as the place in St. Peter testifieth." The passage in St. Peter alluded to is chap. iii. 19, of his First Epistle. On the final revision of the articles in Queen Elizabeth's reign, this explanatory clause was omitted, in consequence, probably, of exceptions which had been taken against it.

139 Tertullian, de Præscript. adv. Hæres. C. 51. Epiphan. advers. Hæres. in Hæres. Apell. Lib. I. T. III. C. III. Augustin alludes to the same view in his De Fide et Symbol. 13. "Solet autem quosdam offendere quod credamus assumptum terrenum corpus in cœlum: nesciunt quomodo dictum sit, seminatur corpus Animale, surget corpus Spirituale."

140 Irenæi, Lib. I. C. II. Τὴν ἔνσαρκον εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ἀνάληψιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ

body, and has since required and assumed none other.[141] In like manner, with a view to maintain the personal identity of Christ, as we are taught to expect him at his second coming, and not only while ascending and ascended, the further assertion might have been made, that he, the same, "shall come to judge the quick and the dead." The particular phrase, "quick and dead," applied to the objects of his judicial appearance, may then be understood as denoting a further extension of the orthodox view, and implying that Christ, although once dead, buried, and ascended into heaven, shall come again in like manner, and with the same body; and, that not only the "quick," those who are alive at his coming, shall in their unperished bodies stand before his tribunal, but "the dead" of all ages, awaking to a real bodily resurrection.

Judgment.

The Third Article.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

The Holy Ghost.

Of the articles of faith set forth in this portion of the Creed, the first, relating to the Holy Ghost, must have been of very early date. This we may presume, without any reference to historical testimony. In no particular was the early Christian's faith so severely tried, as in embracing the doctrine of his own intimate connexion with, and influence by, that Holy Person, who, like the wind, from which he received his name, was viewless and impalpable, and only known by his effects. Hence, the necessity at first of accompanying the ceremony of baptism, when this insensible endowment takes place, with some sensible manifestation, to assure the sanctified of its reality. With the same view, the catechumen would require to be familiarized with a truth, which of all demanded the greatest effort of his faith; and the most experienced Christian, too, would need some perpetual remembrancer, to prevent oblivion or doubt of the golden rule of Christianity, "we walk by faith, and not by sight." The other two articles of belief are of a later age.

2 Cor. v. 7.

Holy Catholic Church.

When the clause concerning the Church was first made use of, the point of faith expressed, was simply belief in "the holy Church;" and it was added, perhaps, by way of enlargement upon the doctrine to which it is now appended,—the belief in the Holy Ghost. It is as a Church that we are the temple of the Holy Ghost;—as a society, that we perform those acts which are the appointed means of grace; and that society is therefore emphatically termed "the holy." The introduction of the term "catholic" into the sentence, may be easily accounted for, by considering the ambiguity of the term Church. It conveyed a caution, that the Church using such a creed should not confine its belief in the Divine residence, to its

[141] It appears first in the writings of Tertullian, who mentions, what might lead us to suppose that it denoted the exercise of his mediatorial power at the right hand of God, namely, the existence of certain heretics, who supposed Christ's state of glory to be one of inactivity. "Affirmant carnem in cœlis vacuam sensu, ut vaginam, exempto Christo, sedere."—De Carne Christi, C. 24.

own particular society; but extend it to that large body, of which Christ is the head, and all churches are portions in particular. The "communion of saints" was a still later addition; and its introduction implies, that the preceding clause had become obscure, inasmuch as it is manifestly an explanation of it. The communion of saints, or Christians, is that which constitutes the essentials of a church; and consists in those acts which are the means of grace, the outward forms through which the Holy Ghost vouchsafes his operations.

Communion of Saints.

Tertullian is the earliest who makes mention of an article on the Church, and this is the view under which he represents it:[142] "After the declaration of faith has been made, and the pledge of salvation received in the name of the Trinity, there follows," he observes, "necessarily, a mention of the Church; forasmuch, as where the three are, that is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, there is the Church; which is their body." Augustin has the same remark, "The right arrangement of the articles of confession required, that to the Trinity should be annexed the Church, as the house to its tenant, to a God his temple, the State to its founder."[143]

Tertullian's view of the last clauses.

The clause on the forgiveness of sins has by some been applied to errors which arose in the second century, the errors of the Montanists and Novatians.[144] But there can be no doubt that it was made an article of belief among the earliest Christians.[145] Without searching far into the probable need for such an article, it may be sufficient to observe, that remission of sins formed not only one of the most prominent points of the good tidings which the Gospel preachers announced, but one of the most objectionable. "Who is he that forgiveth sins also?" expresses a scruple felt in common by Jew and Gentile. It was, in truth, no accidental bias originating in the heated imagination of a theorist, which caused the doctrine to be unacceptable, and likely to be got rid of. The converted Pharisee, who trusted in his righteousness, and the Gentile convert, with his habitual view of unlimited human merit, capable of raising him to heaven, would naturally require some provision against the continual revival of feelings subversive of the true Christian spirit, —so contrary to the humiliating truth, that all, even the best, require "the forgiveness of sins." The same may be observed of "the resurrection of the body," or "the flesh;" which, although useful as a fence against the Gnostic follies already alluded to, must, we may conjecture, have been needed from the ancient prejudice of the anti-Christian world, and is noticed by the earliest writers. The concluding words, "the life everlasting," seem

Forgiveness of Sins.

Luke vii. 49.

Resurrection of the Body.

Life everlasting.

[142] De Baptismo.

[143] Enchir. ad Laurentium, C. 15.

[144] This is the view of the learned and ingenious author of "The Critical History of the Apostles' Creed," whose views generally have been adopted in the preceding remarks.

[145] It appears from Cyprian, that it was in the Creed which the Novatians themselves used. Cyp. Ep. 69, al. 76, ad Magnum. See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book X. Chap. IV. Sec. 4.

properly to belong to the foregoing, and to form with it one assertion; the foundation of which may be seen in our Saviour's declaration, that "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

John v. 28, 29.

Origin of separate Creeds for different Churches.

If this view of the Apostles' Creed be correct, it is nothing improbable, that with the exception of the few clauses specified in the foregoing review of it, Creeds, in substance the same, were used during the apostolic age. At all events, little doubt can be entertained, that such was the case in the age immediately succeeding. We say *Creeds*, because the ancient Creeds corresponded to what in modern Churches are called the Articles of Religion. This, being so, however intimate the union may be among orthodox Churches, the particular circumstances of each may require a different formula of belief, as well as of conformity; even as two confederate monarchies, or democracies, would not require precisely the same statutes and forms of administration. And so, although the Apostles' Creed be the substance of the earliest Creeds, and the precise language to a certain extent, yet there may have been many Creeds from the first; shaped by each Church with reference to its peculiar dangers of faith from without, or the prejudices of its own members within. Thus, as far back as we can trace the history of the early Creeds, that of Jerusalem was always distinct from that of Cæsarea or Antioch, and all these, again, from those of Alexandria or of Rome; and this, during the period of harmony between these Churches.

First encroachment on the independence of separate Churches.

The gradual infringement on the independent character of each separate Church, until it was extinguished by the papal usurpation, is a subject well worthy of more detailed discussion than is compatible with the limits of this inquiry. Among the primitive Churches, each formed its own Creed, its own Liturgy, and regulated its own ceremonies and discipline. The first encroachment took its rise from an apparent convenience. When the ruling powers of the world were generally Christians, each kingdom was made to have the same Liturgy, &c. for all its Churches. To give an instance: when Spain and Gallia Narbonensis became one distinct kingdom, it was decreed by a Council, that there should be exact uniformity through all the Churches of these provinces.[146] The same principle, which thus produced an exact conformity among all the Churches of the same nation, became the ground of enforcing it, at length, on all the Churches of the empire. The first change was in the boundary line of a Church, which was made political instead of ecclesiastical. Men's minds being familiarized to this, and Churches being con-

146 "When Churches became subject to one political head, and national Churches arose from that distinction; then it was thought convenient by all the bishops of such a nation, to unite more closely in rituals and circumstantials of Divine worship, as well as faith and substantials."—Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. Book XVI. C. I. Sec. 13.

sidered as national bodies, it was no very revolting step which was taken by the Romish Church, when it made itself the metropolitan of national Churches; and gradually claimed that conformity to its decrees, and that obedience to its laws, which the metropolitan Church of every nation had acquired a right to expect from all Churches within the political pale of its jurisdiction. It was this miscalled Christian unity which the Reformation violated; and it is against such a Catholic Church, that all Protestants are accused of being guilty of heresy and schism.

The Church of Rome assumes the title of Metropolitan of National Churches.

The custom of forming a code of rules for ceremonial conformity, was of later date than Creeds. The oldest are the *Apostolical Canons*, and the *Constitutions* of Clement, as they are called, although written confessedly long after the death of that bishop. The date of both these must be assigned, even on the view most favourable to their antiquity, to a period much later than that over which the present inquiry extends; nevertheless, some use has been made of them, as records of an order of things, which, if *then* recorded, must have been established in part, some time before any such code of rules respecting it could have been framed.

Apostolical Canons. Constitutions of Clement.

The Creeds were not only taught to the catechumens, but were publicly read in the churches; a custom which has become now almost impracticable. The Articles of the Church of England form too bulky a *symbolum* to be read, as might be desirable, at stated times, in the congregation, and as part of the service. We hear them read in Church only when a clergyman *reads himself in*, as it is called, to a benefice. It is to be wished, however, that the members of the Church could be reminded more frequently and habitually of its peculiar Articles. The subject is well worthy of the consideration of those in authority. A few Articles at a time might be read without too much prolonging the service, although the reading of the whole at once might prove tedious and useless. The main object of such a form is, that it be used "as a sign upon the hand, and as frontlets between the eyes," that the Lord's law may "be in our heart;" and it should not be kept merely for reference and appeal. This is the purpose of Scripture, not of the Articles. One substitute, doubtless, has been provided, in commanding the three Creeds to be read publicly; and, accordingly, in order to give these the sanction and authority of our Church, they are inserted in our Articles, although the doctrines contained in them are elsewhere expressed in the Articles themselves.[147] Still, this only partially effects the purpose which would be gained by continual promulgation of the Articles.

Advantages derived from frequent promulgation of Church Articles.

To return to the primitive Church. It was not only careful to preserve itself, by thus providing against errors of faith, but also by taking cognizance of all immorality or indecorum, which would have

Moral Discipline of the Primitive Church.

[147] In the first five Articles, namely, which are obviously framed on the basis of the Creeds sanctioned afterwards in Art. VIII.

endangered the wellbeing of the community,—endangered it, either by defeating the practical results of the faith on Christians, or by exposing the Church to the scorn and reprehension of those without, whom it was a sacred duty to conciliate by every honest endeavour. In this spirit, Ignatius writes to the Trallians,[148] "Do not let a few unthinking ones among you give occasion to the Gentiles for blaspheming the word and the dispensation of it." Precedents for the application of St. Paul's rule, of being "all things to all men," are furnished abundantly by the apostolic Church, and especially that portion of it which was immediately superintended by the great Gentile apostle. Even in the partial record which is left us, there is no lack of such precedents. The unobtrusive and cautious demeanour of the Church, in every place, may be pointed out as the visible means whereby Providence sheltered it from the ready spirit of persecution in Jew and Gentile; and the testimony of Pliny, when that spirit was awakened, fully proves how little the Church had incurred it by any imprudence or indiscreet regulations.[149]

Immorality an Ecclesiastical as well as a Civil crime.

But, it was not merely the decorous and appropriate demeanour of Christians, which required the guardian care of their constituted guides; their morals, even more than their manners, came under the cognizance of ecclesiastical government; and the exercise of ecclesiastical control here was peculiarly difficult and delicate. It was so on this account: moral offences are, for different reasons, proper objects of punishment to the Christian community considered as a Church, and to the same community considered as a State. With us, accordingly, who have lodged all power in the State, the former view is nearly lost, and punishment is only directed against immorality as a civil crime. But, at the period which we are now considering, each Christian society, bearing all the weight of responsibility on its own shoulders, and not receiving any support from the several civil authorities, felt itself bound to take cognizance of immorality, which, accordingly, became an ecclesiastical offence. In many instances the same act would be both a civil and also an ecclesiastical crime; and this circumstance has had greater influence on the character of the Church's authority than Christians are commonly sensible of. It has occasioned a natural disposition in the Church, from its first patronage by the first Christian emperor, to withdraw its exercise of authority in those matters which come under the cognizance both of Church and State; until all moral ecclesiastical discipline, as such, has been gradually superseded. Theft, for instance, is a crime against the community considered as a civil body,

[148] Chap. viii. In another Epistle of the same Father, (ad Ephes. C. X.) there is a similar passage, and rather an eloquent one, which may, indeed, be applied to the prudence and expediency of good morals, as well as of discreet behaviour. "Give them (unbelievers) the chance of believing through you. Consider yourselves employed by God; your lives, the form of language in which He addresses them. Be mild when they are angry, humble when they are haughty; to their blasphemy oppose prayer unceasing, to their inconsistency, a stedfast adherence to your faith," &c.

[149] Ep. ad Traj.

and also against the same community considered as a Church. Now, when Church and State have become not only composed of the same members, but subject to the same executive control, it seems absurd, for the same offenders to be brought twice to the same tribunal, to be punished separately for the same act,—although that act be really a twofold offence. With the early Christians, however, this was quite necessary; and theft, frauds of every kind, assaults, and all immorality, in short, which was subject to civil penalties, were brought under the cognizance of the Church, and tried without reference to the further punishment which might await the offender from the magistrate. It would be rather beyond the present purpose, to enter into the question of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of Church-discipline as it now stands, and as it must then have operated. One feature of difference, however, cannot fail to force itself on our observation. Whilst acts of immorality are generally civil as well as ecclesiastical offences, so that the offender against the Church seldom escapes punishment, (although it may not be the appropriate punishment,) and others are thereby deterred; still, the same act may be an offence of much greater magnitude in one point of view than in another. The distinction, *e.g.* which the law makes between this and that description of fraud, might not be the same as that which we should make according to ecclesiastical views; although the distinction be clearly just in the former case. But moreover, some acts of immorality, some of the most serious, do not fall under the cognizance of the civil magistrate at all; for instance, adultery, fornication, neglect of filial duty, and the like. When, therefore, the Church ceases to distinguish ecclesiastical from civil offences in moral conduct, some, of no unimportant character, escape all penalty and censure; and the ecclesiastical statutes become obsolete. Hence the Church is forced, in these cases, to depend on the influence of public feeling, to substitute that punishment, for which, in other cases, it depends on the civil powers. At the period on which we are treating, all this was impossible; the Church had no resources from without, and thus, although its power was more circumscribed, its jurisdiction was more comprehensive.

Power of exclusion.

It had, as has been formerly pointed out, one inherent right,—that of exclusion, in all its shades and gradations; which, skilfully managed, became no inefficient system of punishment. Were it likely to have been otherwise, indeed, Christ's kingdom would not have been limited to the use of it; nor would the apostles, in illustrating by their example the principles of our spiritual government, have been so cautious not to venture beyond it. By means of this punishment the primitive Church enforced obedience to its forms of faith, its measures of prudent decorum, and its requisites of moral conduct, as far as moral conduct was necessary to constitute an appropriate evidence of sincerity.

Of the character of this punishment, as it appears in the aposto-

How wielded by the Primitive Churches.

lical Church, some remarks were made in an earlier stage of this inquiry. As far as we can trace, the first uninspired Churches were guided strictly by these models. The offender, whether heretic, nonconformist, or evil-liver, was first cautioned, then excluded from certain acts of communion, generally beginning with the Eucharist. If these successive interdictions failed to bring the offender to a sense of his crime, and to the appropriate acknowledgment of that sense, the Church proceeded to complete exclusion; and in some extreme cases this was made perpetual.[150] It was only when the sentence was that of complete exclusion, that it was made known formally from the Church whose sentence it was, to all others likely to be concerned, that they might be on their guard against receiving the outcast.

Penance.

The formal testimony of contrition, according to the appointment of the Church, was called penance, or penitence. In the gradual distortions of primitive usages, this assumed a place among the penalties of the Church; but its original character, as the term imports, was that of a formal act of submission and sorrow.

This was always requisite before the offender could be received again into communion; but it was not always at once considered sufficient. Excommunication varied, not only as to the religious privileges from which the offender was excluded, but as to the term of his exclusion; and it was found requisite to keep some offenders under this spiritual degradation for a long period,[151] while others were immediately readmitted on acknowledgment of error.

Absolution.

All was performed, as far back as we can trace any account of it, with the strictest regard to the solemnity of Christ's earthly tribunal. As the act of penance was formal and solemn, so, too, was the act of absolution, by which the Church restored its member to his former rights.

150 Such, at least, was the rule retained in the Apostolical Constitutions, Lib. II. C. 41. It may be doubted, however, whether it is to be interpreted as enjoining perpetual exclusion under all circumstances—as allowing no possible readmission. This is not necessarily implied, and we know that the general principle was, for the parent Church to receive its prodigal child, whenever it should give sufficient proof of repentance. Εἰσδέξασθαι αὐτὸν ὡς τὸν υἱὸν τὸν ἀπολωλότα, τὸν ἄσωτον, τὸν μετανοήσαντα μιμήσαντα τὴν ταπεινὴν οὐσίαν. So, too, Ignatius, (ad Phil. C. 3.) "As many as repent and return to the unity of the Church, these shall be of God."

151 See Bingham, Book XVIII. C. I. Sec. 4. St. Paul's intercession for the offending member of the Corinthian Church, that the term of his interdiction should be shortened, proves the apostolical establishment of the custom.

CHAPTER VII.

What Measures the First Uninspired Church Pursued for Self-Preservation from External Dangers.

In the last Chapter, I considered the mode of self-preservation adopted by the primitive Church in reference to the dangers it had reason to apprehend from its own members.

External dangers of the Primitive Church.

But, besides this tendency of the constitution to decay, and become vitiated of itself, there was another class of dangers from without. Heathen philosophy was likely, either to assault Christianity as a rival, or to claim connexion with it as a kindred system. In the apostolic age the Ministry comprised few learned men; and this, evidently, in order to demonstrate that the wisdom of the Gospel was from above.[152] As the Divine gifts of wisdom, of knowledge, and of utterance decayed, human learning and human talents became requisite; and these were not lacking. Men arose with the necessary endowments whose names will be ever dear to Christians. Nor was it long before a sufficient host of these was enlisted in the good cause, to form a noble defence of the true faith. The most critical season was the period of transition,—the one to which we have now advanced; a period when the heavenly and miraculous wisdom was rarely, if ever, vouchsafed, and yet the propagation of the Gospel had scarcely exceeded the original limits of the unlearned and unknown. If we consider the peculiar danger to which the faith was then exposed, we need be thankful, indeed, for the recorded form in which the whole rule of faith was delivered and left.

From the Learned Infidels.

As the new sect spread, philosophers no longer disdained an inquiry into its character, and became candidates for admission. But they came with more than the prejudices of local custom and hereditary manners about them. To a certain extent, their know-

[152] This is what St. Paul asserts, 1 Cor. i. 26. In our Authorized Version it is, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*," &c.; it should have been, *were employed in calling you—were your callers*. The words in Italics have no corresponding words in the original, and supplied words must be determined by the drift of the whole passage. Now what the apostle is dwelling on is, the weakness of the instrumentality which the Lord was employing to convert the world. This he further illustrates by reference to himself, who although not without worldly wisdom, yet did not employ it for the purpose. "And I," (more correctly "Even I") "brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom," &c.—See "Scripture and the Authorized Version of Scripture," p. 40.

ledge of heavenly things was supposed to be begun; and they only sought for more light, not such as would make their former view seem darkness and a dream. Many must have turned away from the Christian preachers discontented and disdainful; and theirs was not the worst case. Others would renounce their former knowledge as vain and unfounded, and apply themselves to the minister for instruction. But the applicant was a philosopher; the teacher, perhaps, a plain, unlettered man. The former, although he renounced his religious errors, still could not at once renounce the habits of thought, the mouldings of mind, through which they had flowed. He could only learn religious theology, as he had once learned metaphysical theology. Unsuspicious of danger, and assuming among his most useful qualifications, that of being "all things to all men," the early teacher might blamelessly convey his holy lesson to these, by illustrations and phrases borrowed from their previous stores. In some instances no harm would ensue. In others, we might expect the doctrine to be corrupted by the impure vessels which received it, and the poisonous effect to exhibit itself alike on catechumen and catechist. Out of all this would arise two distinct scenes of danger to religion—distinct in their progress, although originally the same. From the philosophical world which rejected the Christians' offer, all its wisdom would be openly arrayed to crush it. From that portion which embraced it, there would be no less danger in the impurities which it introduced. These would be the authors of heresy and corruption; the former would be sophists and satirists—the last defenders of the ruined temple of idolatry which they could not bring themselves to forsake. In what way heretics were opposed, and how specific antidotes were provided for their errors and seductions, has been already considered. Against the assaults of infidel writers and orators, too, the Church soon found an appropriate weapon of defence. *Apologies*, or formal defences of the faith, were circulated abroad, and even presented to the imperial throne. Of these, the most famous are those of Justin Martyr, addressed to the Antonines. But, many years earlier, Quadratus, bishop of Athens, and Aristides, had made similar appeals to Hadrian. The province of learning and eloquence was as yet, however, the weakest point of the Church; and Providence had graciously ordained, that as yet the Church should not so greatly need this kind of support.

From the Ignorant Believers.

Apologies.

It was against the *power* of the unbelieving world that its earliest efforts were required; and for this it was proportionably armed. Every son of the Church was baptized unto a faith, which taught him to aspire to an imitation of Christ, not only in his holiness and spiritual endowments, but in his earthly humiliation and his sufferings. "To me to die is gain," was echoed down from the apostle to his meanest convert; and elevation to a bishopric was nearly equivalent to an appointment to martyrdom. To read the Epistles

Character of the Primitive Martyrs.

of Ignatius, or the monuments of the primitive martyrs generally, without a preparatory knowledge of the tone of feeling, which was that of the Church and of the age—leaves the reader with a doubt of the authenticity of the writings, or of the sincerity of the writers. Even among the learned there are some, not exempt from the error of measuring the results of ancient characters, manners, and feelings, as if those characters, manners, and feelings, were still the same, and our own. Apologies have been made, and attempts ingeniously contrived, to soften down the expressions of the ambitious martyr in his glorious thirst for death. What would Ignatius or Polycarp have said to such a dilution of their character? Surely Cranmer and Ridley understood it, although in the quiet and gentle scenes around us, Christian heroism may seem romance, and fervid religion, enthusiasm. Martyrdom, the most eager martyrdom, was an act of self-defence in the Church, through its brave and devoted champion. It was the surest, and often the only means of appeasing the awakened fury of persecution; which, being thus spent on the eminent individual, no longer extended itself to the whole body. Amid the jarring elements of passions and prejudices, with which Christ's holy temple was surrounded, the primitive martyrs were the conductors of the fatal spark whenever it flashed forth. They defied, and they received its fury, but the edifice was untouched.

Persecution not always in reality directed against the Church as such.

For, it is to be observed, that these early persecutions were not altogether the result of state policy, directed against the growth of a political evil. Had it been so, the Roman power was competent (without the intervention of some signal miracle) to have certainly crushed the new sect. But Christianity was, for reasons often alluded to, unpopular; and persecution was, generally, only a permission to indulge popular licentiousness. Hence it happened, that the sacrifice of one or two conspicuous objects, which would have been insufficient and weak as a political measure for suppressing the sect, was often enough to stay persecution.

Evidence to the Truth of Christianity afforded by the Primitive Martyrs.

Such, then, was the character of the primitive martyrs. Nor, in contemplating the immense service rendered by these worthies to the Church formerly, should we forget that to them we also are indebted for an important link in the evidence on which we believe. The primitive martyrs told a tale of miracles which they had seen performed in confirmation of that faith, for which they, therefore, died. Could they have been otherwise than sure, who held life as a trifle, when demanded in testimony of the truth of their assertions? Surely their blood still cries from the earth.

False estimate of the Early Martyrs occasioned by superstitious observances.

It is to be regretted, although we can scarcely wonder at it, that the reverence felt by the Church for benefactors such as these were, should have displayed itself in those various bursts of feeling, which cold-hearted craft, or superstition, afterwards systematized and practised as formal duties. By institutions, not unlike that which should bind us to weep periodically over the grave of one, whose

loss drew involuntary tears from our forefathers; how many Churches, in succeeding ages, have bound themselves to pay the same respect to the relics of these holy men, as did their contemporaries and friends in the first transports of gratitude and affection! It has been worse than this. Instead of that enthusiasm of public or private regard, which naturally passed away with the generation to which they belonged, a false and formal piety was substituted. They, who like Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, lived and died to persuade mankind to turn from idolatrous vanities, were mistaken, like their inspired predecessors, and scarcely regarded as "men of like passions" with their brethren. Martyrs to the truth of that holy record, in which it is written, that "there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," they were gradually addressed as intercessors with God; and whilst that same record declared, that we are saved by faith and not by works, that "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin," and that God gives not his glory to another; their lives were regarded as abounding in transferable merit; and out of their very relics virtue was supposed to go forth.

Legends respecting them.

Hence, too, it has happened, that instead of that simple narrative of their deaths, which we should expect to find, whatever is true concerning them lies buried in an undistinguishable mass of fable and marvels. It would afford little gratification, therefore, to a searcher after truth, to be presented with a series of these false pictures; and, accordingly, we shall confine our notice of the primitive martyrs to two, who are, perhaps, the most illustrious, and whose history is at the same time best authenticated. These are Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, and Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. With the latter of these closes the line of apostolical Fathers, and the period within which the present inquiry has been restricted.

MARTYRDOM OF IGNATIUS.

Ignatius.

To connect the narrative of the martyrdom of Ignatius, which occurred in what is called by ecclesiastical writers the third general persecution, with the mention of the preceding two, it may be necessary to go back for a while to the period which embraces these. It was in the tenth or eleventh year of Nero's reign, that the first of these fiery trials of God's people commenced, which numbered amongst its victims the apostles Peter and Paul. The interval between this and the second general persecution, which has also been noticed as the era of St. John's banishment, comprises a period of twenty-four years. During this time, the general security did not exempt individuals from persecution and death; it being, as has been observed, one of the apparent motives which actuated these heroic champions of the holy Church, to devote themselves, with a nobler patriotism than that of the Decii, that on them might be spent the wrath and spleen, which, otherwise, the Church at large

First Persecution, A.D. 64.

must have felt. Among those who are recorded in this pious service, and whose deaths may be thus supposed to have prolonged this breathing time of the Church, are the apostles St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas; and of the worthy fellow-labourers of the apostles, Martialis, at Ravenna in Italy, Linus at Rome, where he was bishop, and Antipas, at Pergamus.

Martyrdoms of St. Bartholomew, St. Thomas, Martialis, Linus, and Antipas.

The troubled state of the Roman empire during this period, not a little contributed to the secure progress of Christianity, notwithstanding these occasional evidences of an evil spirit opposed to it. From the death of Nero to the reign of Vespasian, the imperial throne was perpetually contested, and the whole world thereby kept in continual alarm and suspense. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, were scarcely allowed, one after the other, to take possession of the prize, when they were called on to pay the usual price of their lives for it. At length Vespasian secured for himself and for his family a more permanent seat; the tumult of political animosity gradually died away, and Christianity was destined to be one of the chief objects, on which the turbulent and bloody spirits of the age vented those savage feelings which, nursed amid civil wars, no longer found their former opportunity of indulgence. It was during the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, the martyrdoms above mentioned occurred. But even these acts of self-devotion could not long divert the popular fury from the whole body of Christians. A second persecution commenced in Domitian's reign. Under Nerva, his successor, a brief respite was obtained; but with the accession of Trajan a fresh scene of troubles was opened. Early in this reign, Clement, bishop of Rome, met the fate of his predecessors in that perilous station, and was cast into the sea with an anchor about his neck. The reigning emperor, according to history, was neither cruel nor supine; but his government becoming more and more embarrassed with the question concerning the proper management of the Christians, the established system continued to be acted on, until some better method should be devised; and, accordingly, cruelty and injustice were not less conspicuous in this than in the preceding reigns. If we may credit the Greek Martyrology, besides the distinguished individuals who suffered, on one occasion one thousand one hundred Christian soldiers were banished into Armenia by order of the emperor; one thousand of whom perished by crucifixion on Mount Ararat. The account may be false or exaggerated. Trajan may have been, as he is represented, neither a bloody tyrant, nor an inert monarch; but, if his character were really thus unspotted, his lot was at least unfortunate for his future fame. Christians cannot forget, that it was during his administration of the affairs of the world, that, separately and successively, the wanton violence of the people was gratified with the blood of five blameless bishops, besides numbers, most of whose names are only recorded in heaven. The rebellion of the Jews in Alexandria, Cyrene, and Cyprus; the

Second Persecution. A.D. 90.

Clement.

wrongs which roused them to vengeance, and their dreadful acts of retribution—all this, too, contributes to make the picture of his reign such a scene of bloodshed and general inhumanity, that it is vain to plead his love of humane literature and of literary men, against the impression which is thus made on us.

Third Persecution, A.D. 107.

It was about A.D. 107, when the emperor, in the full confidence of a prosperous reign of nearly nine years, came to Antioch, to prepare for a war against the Parthians and Armenians. He had already in other parts of the empire indulged the persecuting spirit, which was always ripe to burst forth against the Christians; and his arrival at Antioch was, accordingly, received by the bishop, the good Ignatius, as a certain presage of distress and danger to his flock. He at once adopted the bold remedy, which before had been tried with success by others. He presented himself to Trajan, and behaved in a manner which attracted to himself chiefly, if not wholly, the attention of the monarch; and his sentence was, to be conveyed to Rome, and there to be thrown publicly to wild beasts. The interview between the emperor and the holy man, if faithfully related, was well adapted to produce the desired result. It presents a strange contrast between the language of a sovereign of the world, and the simple avowal of one who felt himself beyond his grasp.

Arrival of Trajan at Antioch.

Interview between Ignatius and Trajan.

Being come into the presence of the Emperor, Trajan asked him,[155] saying, What a wicked wretch art thou, thus to endeavour to transgress our commands, and to persuade others also to do likewise, to their destruction?—Ignatius answered, No one ought to call Theophorus[156] after such a manner; forasmuch as all wicked spirits are departed far from the servants of God. But if, because I am a trouble to those evil spirits, you call me wicked, with reference to them I confess the charge; for, having within me Christ, the heavenly King, I dissolve all the snares of the devils.

Trajan replied, And who is Theophorus?—*Ignatius.* He who has Christ in his breast.—*Trajan.* And do not we then seem to thee to have the gods within us, who fight for us against our enemies?—*Ignatius.* You err, in that you call the evil spirits of the heathens, gods. For there is but one God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that are in them; and one Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, whose kingdom may I enjoy.

Trajan. His kingdom, you say, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?—*Ignatius.* His, who crucified my sin with the inventor of it; and has put all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry him in their heart.—*Trajan.* Dost thou then carry Him who was crucified within thee?—*Ignatius.* I do; for it is written, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them."—Then

155 "Martyrdom of Ignatius," Archbishop Wake's translation.

156 This name was doubtless adopted in allusion to the Christian doctrine, that we are "the temple of the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us."

His sentence.

Trajan pronounced the sentence against him. Forasmuch as Ignatius has confessed, that he carries about within himself Him that was crucified, we command that he be carried, bound by soldiers, to the great Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts, for the entertainment of the people.

When the holy martyr heard this sentence, he cried out with joy, "I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love towards thee; and hast made me to be put into iron bonds with thy apostle Paul."

He writes his Epistles.

It was in his journey to Rome, that the six Epistles were written, which comprise his genuine remains. Of that addressed to the Romans, expressing an anxiety to prevent any attempt to rescue, or even to intercede for him, some mention has been already made. On the same topic he dwells in his other Epistles.

It was more peculiarly, however, for his own charge at Antioch that he had courted death; and from his *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, written from Troas, he must have had the consolation of knowing that he had not devoted himself in vain. The persecution had, by this time, begun to abate; although its mitigation may, perhaps, have been owing to the concurrence of another cause, which deserves notice.[157]

Pliny's Letter to Trajan.

The governor of Bithynia at this period was Pliny, the elegant author of the Letters which are in the hands of every scholar. That he was no ordinary favourite and friend of the emperor, those Letters testify; and the use which he appears to have made of this influence, is not the least brilliant part of his character. Finding himself daily more and more embarrassed by complaints against the Christians, he investigated their case, and sent the statement to the emperor, with a request for further instruction for his conduct. It was no common merit in that age, to have so far opposed the current of popular feeling, as to have given the question a patient and candid, although an imperfect investigation; and to have represented it so to the monarch, as to remove from his mind its worst suspicions. Concerning his Letter it may be sufficient to remark, that it bore evidence to the moral and orderly behaviour of the persecuted Christians; which was the point *then* most important, because it, doubtless, mainly contributed to check the permission to persecute. It has further placed on a heathen record the fact, that in that early period of the Church, one of its prominent practices, was the worship of Christ as God.[158]

[157] Euseb. Hist. Lib. III. C. 33.

[158] What the full information was which Pliny obtained respecting the Christian rites, especially from the two deaconesses whom he examined by torture, we do not know. His account is only the confession of certain apostates, in which, nevertheless, there is an obvious agreement with the truth. "They declare," he writes, "that this was the amount of their guilt, or their error;—that on a stated day they used to meet before daylight, and address to Christ, as God, a form of words broken into alternate portions; that their sacrament was nothing to bind them to any deed of wickedness, but to preserve them from committing theft, robbery, falsehood,

MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP.

A.D. 167.

Heresies between the time of Ignatius and Polycarp.

From the death of Ignatius to that of the last surviving apostolic Father, Polycarp, an interval of about sixty years intervenes, during which the Church was still perpetually called on to exert all its efforts for self-preservation. Its dangers from within were kept up by the craft or enthusiasm of such men as Basilides, Valentinius, and Marcion,[159] together with other sectarians, if possible, more impious and absurd—Ophitæ, Cainitæ, Sethiani. The wit and learning of the avowed heathens were more vigorously directed against the encroaching influence of a system, the establishment of which was the overthrow of what then seemed the most sublime and important portion of philosophy.[160] The Christians were called on to write answers to accusations, and to refute arguments. Nor was the sword of persecution less bloody than heretofore. Trajan's Letter to Pliny, which, doubtless, established the principle by which the accusations against Christians were treated during the remainder of his reign, still gave considerable latitude to any provincial governor, who was either himself cruel, or disposed to indulge the malice and caprice of the provincials. Even at Rome, and shortly after the emperor's rule was laid down, Onesimus, St. Paul's disciple, is said to have been stoned.[161]

Infidel attacks.

Fourth Persecution, A.D. 118.

Whatever moderation Trajan, however, may have used during the latter part of his reign, it was no longer observed on the accession of Hadrian. Persecution, severe and general, was again suffered to go on without control or mercy. At Rome, especially, it was no longer directed against the most eminent, but numbers were wantonly murdered, and still more were driven to seek shelter in crypts and caves. Their bishop, Evaristus, was among the first martyrs. A letter from Serenius Granianus[162] to the emperor, in behalf of the defenceless Christians, procured at length an order for mitigating the severity of the proceedings. Still, even the intervals between the avowed and authorized persecutions abound with occasional acts, which, under existing prejudices, could not fail to be perpetually committed. Before Hadrian's reign was closed, Alex-

dishonest practices; that, when it was all over, they used to disperse, and again meet at a meal, in which there was nothing remarkable or blameworthy." This meal was, of course, the Feast of Love. For Pliny's statement and Trajan's reply, see Plin. Ep. X. 97, 98.

159 Montanus and his followers were not yet marked as heretics, although they were, before the death of Polycarp, sowing the seeds of error.

160 It is quite necessary, in order to understand Aristotle's view of σοφία in Ethics, to connect it with his religious theory—that the Deity, namely, pervaded the universe, and was the universe.

161 The martyrologies make him bishop of Antioch. See Cave.

162 He was proconsul of Asia, and his Letter represents the Christian persecutions as an unjustifiable indulgence of popular licentiousness. As the Emperor's rescript was addressed to Minucius Fundanus, the Christians of that province must soon have lost the protection of one who deserves to be remembered as the first heathen governor who recommended the toleration of Christianity, as a right which could not justly be denied to Christian subjects. See Euseb. Hist. Lib. IV. C. 8 and 9.

ander, another bishop of Rome, suffered; and the deaths of Getulius, Amantius Cerealis, and others of less note, occurred nearly within the last year of it. The Antonines succeeded, and from that period to the fifth great persecution which preceded the death of Polycarp, two more bishops of Rome, Telesphorus and Hyginus, besides Justin Martyr, and many of inferior note, kept up the succession of martyrs.

Of Alexander, Bishop of Rome.

Of Telesphorus, Hyginus, and Justin.

Polycarp had been permitted to arrive at extreme old age, notwithstanding his known zeal and activity as bishop of Smyrna. He was born during the reign of Nero, and is said to have enjoyed the instruction and friendship of several of the apostles, of St. Paul especially, and St. John. No testimony to his good use of these great advantages can add weight to that which has been left on record by the last-mentioned apostle in the book of Revelations. "Unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."[163]

Early life of Polycarp.

The veneration felt by the whole Christian world, for one whose character and prophetic history had been thus made sacred by an apostle's pen, and who was the last of those who had conversed with the apostles themselves, may sufficiently account for his martyrdom. He was called for by the acclamations of a mob, and sacrificed to their inhuman wantonness. Among the relics of ecclesiastical antiquity, few are more worthy of being generally known than the *Epistle of the Church of Smyrna*, which details, simply and sincerely, all the incidents of his fate. Scaliger has said of it,[164] that he never met with any thing in ecclesiastical history which so much affected him, and that after reading it he was no longer himself. A literal translation of the main parts of this Epistle then will, perhaps, be more generally acceptable than any other narrative of the martyrdom of the last apostolical Father. Of his own writings we have only one Epistle, not unworthy of his fame. It is addressed to the Philippians, and is preserved partly in the original Greek, and partly in an ancient Latin translation. Some of it is entirely lost.

Epistle of the Church of Smyrna.

[163] Chap. ii. 8—10.
[164] In Animadvers. Eusebian. Num. 2183.

EXTRACT FROM THE EPISTLE OF THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA ON THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP.[165]

"Polycarp, when he first heard that he was called for, was not at all concerned at it, but resolved to tarry in the city. Nevertheless, he was at the last persuaded, at the desire of many, to go out of it. He departed, therefore, into a little village not far distant from the city, and there tarried with a few about him; doing nothing, night nor day, but praying for all men, and for the Churches which were in all the world, according to his usual custom. And as he was praying, he saw a vision[166] three days before he was taken; and, behold, the pillow under his head seemed to him on fire. Whereupon, turning to those who were with him, he said prophetically, that he should be burnt alive.

"Now when those who were to take him drew near, he departed into another village; and immediately they who sought him came thither. And when they found him not, they seized upon two young men that were there; one of which, being tormented, confessed. For it was impossible he should be concealed, forasmuch as they who betrayed him were his own domestics. So the officer, who is also called *Cleronomus*, (Herod by name,) hastened to bring him into the lists; that so Polycarp might receive his proper portion, being made partaker of Christ, and they that betrayed him, undergo the punishment of Judas.

"The serjeants, therefore, and horsemen, taking the young lad along with them, departed about supper-time, (being Friday,) with their usual arms, as it were against a thief or a robber. And being come to the place where he was, about the close of the evening, they found him lying down in a little upper room, from whence he could easily have escaped into another place, but he would not, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.'

"Wherefore, when he heard that they had come to the house, he went down and spake to them. And as they that were present wondered at his age and constancy, some of them began to say, 'Was there need of all this care to take such an old man?' Then presently he ordered, that the same hour there should be somewhat got ready for them, that they might eat and drink their fill; desiring them withal, that they would give him one hour's liberty the while to pray without disturbance. And when they had permitted him, he stood praying, being full of the grace of God, so that he ceased not for two whole hours, to the admiration of all that heard him; insomuch that many of the soldiers began to repent that they were come out against so godly an old man.

165 The Epistle is addressed "From the Church of God which is at Smyrna to the Church of God which is at Philadelphia, and to all other assemblies of the holy Catholic Church, in every place." The translation is Archbishop Wake's.

166 Ἐν ὀπτασιᾷ γέγονε. Eusebius represents it as a dream.

"As soon as he had done his prayer—in which he remembered all men, whether little or great, honourable or obscure, that had at any time been acquainted with him; and, with them, the whole Catholic Church over all the world—the time being come that he was to depart, the guards set him upon an ass, and so brought him into the city, being the day of the great Sabbath. And Herod, the chief officer, with his father Nicetas, met him in a chariot. And having taken him up to them, and set him in the chariot, they began to persuade him, saying, 'What harm is there in it, to say, Lord Cæsar, and sacrifice, (with the rest that is usual on such occasions,) and so be safe?' But Polycarp, at first, answered them not: whereupon they continuing to urge him, he said, 'I shall not do what you persuade me to.' So being out of all hope of prevailing with him, they began first to rail at him, and then, with violence, threw him out of the chariot, insomuch that he hurt his thigh with the fall. But he, not turning back, went on readily with all diligence, as if he had received no harm at all; and so was brought to the lists, where there was so great a tumult, that nobody could be heard.

"As he was going into the lists, there came a voice from heaven to him, 'Be strong, Polycarp, and quit thyself like a man.' Now no one saw who it was that spake to him; but for the voice, many of our brethren, who were present, heard it. And as he was brought in, there was a great disturbance when they heard how that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him, 'Whether he was Polycarp;' who confessing that he was, he persuaded him to deny the faith, saying, 'Reverence thy old age;' with many other things of the like nature, as their custom is; concluding thus, 'Swear by Cæsar's fortune. Repent, and say, Take away the wicked.' Then Polycarp, looking with a stern countenance upon the whole multitude of wicked Gentiles, that was gathered together in the lists; and shaking his hand at them, looked up to heaven, and groaning, said, 'Take away the wicked.' But the proconsul insisting and saying, 'Swear; and I set thee at liberty: reproach Christ;' Polycarp replied, 'Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and He has never done me the least wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?'

"And when the proconsul nevertheless still insisted, saying, 'Swear by the genius of Cæsar,' he answered, 'Seeing thou art so vainly urgent with me that I should swear, as thou callest it, by the genius of Cæsar, seeming as if thou didst not know what I am; hear me freely professing to thee, that I am a Christian. But if thou farther desirest an account of what Christianity is, appoint a day, and thou shalt hear it.' The proconsul replied, 'Persuade the people.' Polycarp answered, 'To thee have I offered to give a reason of my faith: for so are we taught to pay all due honour, (such only excepted as would be hurtful to ourselves,) to the powers and

authority which are ordained of God. But for the people, I esteem them not worthy, that I should give any account of my faith to them.'

"The proconsul continued, and said unto him, 'I have wild beasts ready; to those I will cast thee, except thou repent.' He answered, 'Call for them then; for we Christians are fixed in our minds, not to change from good to evil. But for me, it will be good, to be changed from evil to good.' The proconsul added, 'Seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, I will cause thee to be devoured by fire, unless thou shalt repent.' Polycarp answered, 'Thou threatenest me with fire which burns for an hour, and so is extinguished; but knowest not the fire of the future judgment, and of that eternal punishment which is reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt.'

"Having said this, and many other things of the like nature, he was filled with confidence and joy, insomuch that his very countenance was full of grace; so that he did not only not let it fall with confusion at what was spoken to him; but on the contrary, the proconsul was struck with astonishment, and sent his crier into the middle of the lists, to proclaim three several times, 'Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian.' Which being done by the crier, the whole multitude, both of the Gentiles and of the Jews which dwelt at Smyrna, being full of fury, cried out with a loud voice, 'This is the doctor of Asia,[167] the father of Christians, and the overthrower of our gods; he that has taught so many not to sacrifice, nor pay any worship to the gods.' And saying this, they cried out, and desired Philip the Asiarch,[168] that he would let loose a lion against Polycarp. But Philip replied, that it was not lawful for him to do so, because that kind of spectacle was already over. Then it pleased them to cry out with one consent, that Polycarp should be burnt alive. For so it was necessary for the vision to be fulfilled, which was made manifest unto him by his pillow, when, seeing it on fire as he was praying, he turned about, and said prophetically to the faithful that were with him, 'I must be burnt alive.'

"This, therefore, was done with greater speed than it was spoke; the whole multitude instantly gathering together wood and fagots, out of the shops and baths; the Jews especially, according to their custom, with all readiness assisting them in it. When the fuel was ready, Polycarp, laying aside all his upper garments, and undoing his girdle, tried also to pull off his clothes underneath, which aforetime he was not wont to do; forasmuch as always every one of the Christians that was about him contended who should soonest touch

167 The reading of the Greek manuscript is, ὁ τῆς ἀσιβείας διδάσκαλος, but Eusebius, Rufinus, and the old Latin translator, read, ἀσίας, which has been accordingly adopted by Archbishop Wake.

168 Not the Roman governor, but one who was elected annually by the provincials from themselves, to preside over the public spectacles, and other solemnities. See Usher, *in loco*.

his flesh. For he was truly adorned by his good conversation with all kind of piety, even before his martyrdom. This being done, they presently put about him such things as were necessary to prepare the fire. But when they would have also nailed him to the stake, he said, 'Let me alone as I am; for He who has given me strength to endure the fire, will also enable me, without your securing me by nails, to stand without moving in the pile.'

"Wherefore they did not nail him, but only tied him to it. But he, having put his hands behind him, and being bound as a ram chosen out of a great flock for an offering, and prepared to be a burnt-sacrifice acceptable unto God, looked up to heaven, and said, 'O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy well-beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of thee; the God of angels and powers, and of every creature, and especially of the whole race of just men, who live in thy presence! I give thee hearty thanks that thou hast vouchsafed to bring me to this day, and to this hour; that I should have a part in the number of thy martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost. Among which may I be accepted this day before thee, as a fat and acceptable sacrifice; as thou the true God, with whom is no falsehood, hast both before ordained and manifested unto me, and also hast now fulfilled it. For this, and for all things else, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, by the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son; with whom, to thee, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, both now and to all succeeding ages. Amen.'

"He had no sooner pronounced aloud *Amen*, and finished his prayer, but they who were appointed to be his executioners lighted the fire. And when the flame began to blaze to a very great height, behold, a wonderful miracle appeared,[169] to us who had the happiness to see it, and who were reserved by heaven to report to others what had happened. For the flame, making a kind of arch, like the sail of a ship filled with the wind, encompassed, as in a circle, the body of the holy martyr; who stood in the midst of it, not as if his flesh were burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold or silver glowing in the furnace. Moreover, so sweet a smell came from it, as if frankincense, or some rich spices, had been smoking there.

"At length, when those wicked men saw that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded the executioner to go near to him, and stick his dagger in him; which being accordingly done, there came forth so great a quantity of blood,[170] as even

[169] From the narrative itself, there is good reason to think, that the friends of the martyr mistook for a miracle what was the effect of accident. The same may be observed of the voice which encouraged him. For the proper estimate of accounts of miracles given by uninspired writers, see p. 174.

[170] Ἐξῆλθε περιστερὰ καὶ πλῆθος, αἵματος. The translator has omitted the word περιστερὰ, which, indeed, can hardly be the genuine reading; for a circumstance so remarkable must have been noticed by Eusebius and Rufinus. Perhaps we should read ἐξῆλθε περὶ στέρνα καὶ . . . . πλῆθος, αἵματος.

extinguished the fire, and raised an admiration in all the people, to consider what a difference there was between the infidels and the elect; one of which this great martyr, Polycarp, most certainly was; being in our times a truly apostolical and prophetical teacher, and bishop of the Catholic church which is at Smyrna. For every word that went out of his mouth, either has been already fulfilled, or, in its due time, will be accomplished.

"But when the emulous, and envious, and wicked adversary of the race of the just, saw the greatness of his martyrdom; and considered how irreprehensible his conversation had been from the beginning, and how he was now crowned with the crown of immortality, having without all controversy received his reward; he took all possible care, that not the least remainder of his body should be taken away by us, although many desired to do it, and to be made partakers of his holy flesh. And to that end, he suggested it to Nicetas, the father of Herod, and brother of Alcé, to go to the governor and hinder him from giving us his body to be buried. 'Lest, (says he,) forsaking Him that was crucified, they should begin to worship this Polycarp.' And this he said at the suggestion and instance of the Jews; who also watched us, that we should not take him out of the fire: not considering, that neither is it possible for us ever to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all such as shall be saved throughout the whole world, *the righteous for the ungodly;* nor worship any other besides him. For him, indeed, as being the Son of God, we do adore: but for the martyrs, we worthily love them, as the disciples and followers of our Lord: and upon the account of their exceeding great affection towards their Master, and their King. Of whom may we also be made companions and fellow-disciples."[171]

CONCLUSION.

Our Lord's Promise of continuance with his Church.

It is impossible to look back on the scenes which we have been reviewing,—the efforts of the primitive Church, to preserve the sacred record of the Gospel; to perpetuate its evidence; to dispense its truths; to convey its promised grace; and, lastly, to preserve itself as the temple of Divine manifestation, and the holy of holies, where the blessed gift has been deposited—it is impossible to look back on all this, without acknowledging the continued fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, that he would be with his Church always, even unto the end of the world.

Matt xviii. 20.

171 This, then, is the indignant avowal of those very persons, whose authority is insisted on for the primitive custom of worshipping relics! Augustin has nearly the same sentiment: "Non sit nobis Religio cultus hominum mortuorum; quia si piè vixerunt, non sic habentur, ut tales quærant honores; sed Illum a nobis coli volunt, quo illuminante, lætantur, meriti sui nos esse consortes. Honorandi ergo sunt propter imitationem, non adorandi propter Religionem."—*Lib. de vera Relig.* Sec. 109.

For, together with the efforts of man, the silent measures of co-operating Providence have borne a part too important and too manifest to escape notice. They are recognised in all those collateral events, which were beyond the forethought and control of men,—in the seasonable removal of the sceptre from Judah; in the universal empire, permitted for a time to the Romans; and in the very struggles for the imperial dignity, which occurred during the first era of the Gospel. These, then, have been pointed out in the progress of this inquiry, as the main features of that portion of the mighty work, on which the finger of God is apparent; while others more minute, but not less certainly discernible, have continually presented themselves.

How fulfilled to the Primitive Church.

Still more will the presence of Christ with his Church be apparent, as we trace its onward course, through the long lapse of time which separates the first age from our own. In each successive period, we shall see the Church, sometimes languid and feeble in its efforts, sometimes awakened and refreshed like a giant from sleep. We shall see, too, the successive appointments of Providence, operating to aid the efforts of men in accomplishing the great scheme of the Gospel. As the distance has increased between the events recorded in the New Testament, and the several generations of those whose best hopes rest on the faithfulness of the record, a new art has been given to the world, and printing has furnished additional and ample security against all danger of corruption. This provision for checking the injurious effect of time on the authenticity of a record, has indeed been beautifully commensurate with the need. Science, art, commerce, all the shiftings of scene which have occurred in the world, have proved, often unexpectedly, the means of fostering or extending religion. Other instruments, more important than this, may be even now in action, in scenes and measures which we are imperfectly surveying; or may be reserved for a future age.

And afterwards.

Meanwhile, did the primitive Church, has any Church, arrived at all that spiritual eminence on earth, for which the Gospel seems to have designed us? There are various scruples, by which men are commonly deterred from candidly meeting this question. Some look back with blind admiration on the past; others regard all improvement, not yet made, as chimerical, and not contemplated in the Gospel scheme. That the provisions made—not indeed for the salvation of Christians—but for the perfection of the Christian body, the Church, have been hitherto gradual and progressive, there can be no denying; and if so, the primitive Church itself is not to be regarded as the exact counterpart of that holy pattern, which God in his last Revelation has given us, for this mysterious workmanship, —his Church. The purest Church will hardly abide the test of such an admeasurement. It may, perhaps, be called chimerical, to look for a more perfect realization of those glorious visions, which the Holy Spirit has left with us; but if it be fanciful, let us at least

Future progress of the Church.

pause, and candidly confess in what the illusion consists. It is, to dwell on a scene, where every man shall be a Christian, and every Christian shall live, as if the Son of God were his daily companion, at home in his family, abroad in his intercourse with the world. It is, to hope for a period, when that awful feeling which deterred the Israelitish worshipper from profaning the holy vessels of the temple, and from polluting its altar, shall be even more strongly felt by the Christian in his use of himself, that vessel made unto honour, in the living temple of the Holy Ghost; when every member of Christ's Church, conscious that he belongs to a society with which God is mysteriously united, shall shudder to do aught that may be sacrilege therein. And, if all this be indeed fanciful and unfounded, be it excused for the sake of Him, who set no boundary to our hopes of improvement, bidding us purify ourselves even as He is pure; be perfect, even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect.

But why should this state of things be unattainable? Is it because the Christian is already under the best and most advantageous circumstances for profiting by that Divine grace, through which alone, all acknowledge, that such an event, if practicable, must be accomplished? Or, is it from a view of the corruption of human nature,—the strength of evil in man? One of these suppositions must be the ground of our doubt. The latter may be more fully stated thus. The natural corruption of human nature, it may be said, has all along prevented a more effectual and perfect operation of the Holy Spirit; and as this corruption must exist to the end of time, no future circumstances, however advantageous to the use of God's grace, ought to be supposed capable of advancing us much nearer to this perfection, inasmuch as they cannot remove that corruption. Now this view does really involve a denial of the sufficiency of Divine grace to accomplish the very object for which it was given: it implies a distrust in those promises and assurances which, in one sense, are extended to all Christians: "My grace is sufficient for thee," "My strength is made perfect in weakness," "With man this is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible," "Without me ye can do nothing," but "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," "I in you, and you in me." If therefore we believe the assurances of God, we cannot, consistently, maintain that the strength of evil in man is so great, that under no circumstances the promised help of God will completely counteract and overpower it. We cannot, as Christians, doubt that this *is* practicable; although we may differ about the conditions which may be requisite for rendering it so.

Taking then the other view as the ground of our doubts, we must suppose, that our present condition admits of no such improvement, as would make it much more easy for us to obey God. On a survey of all the existing institutions of the Christian world—of the constitution of every Church, and of the means it provides for dispersing

the seed and bringing to maturity the fruit, of true religion—can it be said that all these are, in any instance, so perfect, as to justify this despair?

If so, we must be content to explain away, as best we may, the brilliant pictures of prophecy. We must be content to do more—to confess that Christ has put into our hands an instrument unsuited to our powers; that his gift of the "shield of faith" and the "sword of the Spirit," is like the weapons of a giant presented to a warrior of ordinary stature; and that an angel only could sustain the whole armour of God, or wield with effect the heavenly weapon. Surely this is a view of the Christian scheme not easily to be adopted.

It is indeed a peculiarity of the Gospel, that, unlike a system of philosophy, or the dream of a theorist, it proffers the means of attaining perfection, instead of dwelling on Utopian plans for unassisted nature to aim at realizing. The philosopher and the theorist give a map of Elysium, to those who are separated from it by an insuperable barrier; the Gospel promises us that help which shall enable us to surmount the barrier,—to "pass over the great gulf." Luke xvi. 26. Precise description of the scene is no part of its office. It is THE WAY; let us pursue it in faith, not doubting the goodness of the promised land to which it is said to lead.

APPENDIX.

Note [A.] Page 4. A.

In the ancient Egyptian religion the Supreme Being was probably represented by the emblem of a serpent coiled into a circle, with the head of a hawk, denoting eternity and omniscience.[1] In time the symbol became in itself an object of reverence, whilst the meaning was lost. The same process is perpetually going on even in the case of *words;* to which we are prone to attach a regard so strong, as in time to divert the attention from their original application and character. There are some such in every language, so sanctified by use, that many minds would revolt at substituting any other arbitrary expressions for the ideas which they are supposed to convey, as much as at renouncing the ideas themselves. How much stronger this feeling must have been when the expression was symbolical or allegorical! Nothing is more likely, than that the creation of the world by the Supreme Being and his *Word*, was originally signified by the fable of Cneph, sending forth an egg from his mouth, which produced the universe.[2] Yet this allegorical record only ministered afterwards to superstition. Egyptian Symbols.

The case of the Jews, and the brazen serpent which Hezekiah broke, is familiar to all. See 2 Kings xviii. 4.

The encroachment of idolatry on the true faith, cannot be supposed to have been made every where without a struggle. That such actually was the case in Egypt, may be inferred from a fragment which has been preserved of its earlier history. The Egyptians of Thebais, at one period, claimed exemption from the tribute paid for the support of the sacred animals in Lower Egypt, on the ground of their worshipping *Cneph*, the name by which the Supreme Being appears to have been designated, according to the fable before

[1] Euseb. de Præp. Evang. Lib. I. C. 10, where a fragment of Philo Biblius's translation of Sanchoniathon is given. The emblem is described as very like the Greek Θ.

The prevalence of serpent-worship all through the idolatrous world is very remarkable. In this fragment of Sanchoniathon, preserved by Eusebius, it is attributed to the Phœnicians as well as to the Egyptians.

Among the Greeks and Romans, it was an indispensable part of the representation of Æsculapius (see Livii Epitome, Lib. II. and Ovidii Metamorph. Lib. XV. Fab. 50). We recognise it in Babylon, in the story of Bel and the Dragon; and on modern authorities its existence has been asserted in Muscovy; (Sigismundi's History, cited in Dr. Nichol's conference with a Theist, page 200;) in the East Indies, and among the savage tribes of Africa. See Millar's History of the Propagation of Christianity, Vol. I. p. 221.

[2] Præpar. Evang. Lib. I. C. 10, and Lib. III. C. 2; Cudworth, Syst. Intell. Cap. 4, Sect. 18, p. 526, Mosheim's edition.

Appendix. A. Egyptian Symbols.

alluded to. (See Plutarch de Iside et Osir. referred to by Bishop Cumberland in his Sanchoniatho, p. 13.) Cudworth, in his Intellectual System, has made a similar application of the passage. (See Mosheim's edition, vol. i. p. 527, and p. 730.) His learned editor has indeed raised an objection, on the ground that the Egyptians understood by the term Cneph, and by the symbol to which it was applied, *The Creative Power*, and that this was no characteristic with them of the Supreme Being. But this fact rather supports Cudworth's view. For, does it not seem unaccountable, that the one part of the Egyptian nation should have excluded from their religion all the gods of the other, *because their God was the Creative Power?* Does it not indicate that the Egyptians of Thebais had not yet, like the rest of their countrymen, and like all the heathen, *distinguished* the Creator from the Supreme Being, and classed him among deified men, and the symbols of idolatry?

B.

Note [B.] Page 14.

Allegorizing of Pagan Mythology.

Vide Eusebii Præparat. Evangel. Lib. II. C. 2, and again, C. 6, where he alludes to this method of defence being set up by the philosophical champions of orthodoxy. Τοιαύτα ἦν τὰ τῆς παλαίας, θεολογίας, ἣν μεταβάλοντες νεοῖ τίνες, χθὲς καὶ πρώην ἐπιφύεντες, λογικώτερον τε φιλοσοφεῖν αὐχοῦντες, τὴν δὴ φυσικώτεραν τῆς περὶ Θεὸν ἱστορίας δόξαν ἀρνήσαντο, σεμνότερας εὐρεσιολογίας τοῖς μυθοῖς προσεπινοήσαντες. Tertullian makes a similar allusion in his tract against Marcion, (Lib. I. C. 13.) "Ipsa quoque vulgaris superstitio communis Idololatriæ, *cum in simulacris de nominibus et fabulis veterum mortuorum pudet*, ad interpretationem naturalem refugit, et dedecus suum ingenio obumbrat, figurans Jovem in substantiam fervidam, et Junonem in aerem," &c. The subject is discussed at large by Warburton in the Divine Legation, Book III. § 6.

What was thus done with some reason by the heathen, was afterwards perversely imitated by the Christian Fathers, who applied to the defence of the Bible the principles of criticism on which the Pagan mythology had been upheld. These were again imitated by the mystics of the twelfth century, who even proceeded to found their system of interpretation on Scripture itself, and quoted for this end, "litera occidit, spiritus vivificat;" as if the literal and primary sense of Scripture was pronounced worse than useless. See Marsh's Divinity Lectures, Lect. XVII.

C.

Note [C.] Page 23.

Twofold object of the Jewish Scriptures.

In contemplating the Jewish dispensation, it is very important to distinguish between those parts which seem to have been designed for *immediate* revelation, or other immediate purposes, and those which could only have served indirectly to qualify the Jews for a

future revelation, and a finished dispensation. The principle may be extended even to their canon of Scripture. For, not to mention such obscure prophecies, as could only be understood by a knowledge of the event after it had taken place, there is a great portion of the Old Testament Scriptures which seem to have had no further use and design, than to educate the people at large for Gospel instruction. The Jews had no literature but Scripture; and God was not only their Supreme Governor, but their national Preceptor. By means of those parts of the Proverbs, the Psalms, and Prophets, which, conveying no revelation, often no religious truth, are merely valuable for the acute judgment, or the poetic imagination displayed, —by means of these, the national taste and mode of thinking received such a moulding as was best suited for the teaching of the Messiah when he came. From these, accordingly, he borrows his images and illustrations, and to these perpetually alludes in order to make himself understood.

Appendix. C.

Twofold object of the Jewish Scriptures.

Of all the Jewish Scriptures so circumstanced, no one portion is so remarkable as the Song of Solomon. It appears to contain no revelation,—no religious instruction. It suggests to us no character but that of a royal epithalamium. But if we wish to discover a reason why the Spirit of God should have sanctioned the work, let us refer to the narrative of Christ's discourses and parables; and we shall find them abounding with the images which it furnishes—the bride—the bridegroom—the wedding feast—the wedding garment—the fidelity of the mysterious spouse, and the like. Evidently he had found in this work a train of images which had taken possession of the popular fancy from their beauty, and had also become sanctified by their place in the Scriptures. This and the like portions of Holy Writ had given just such a degree of cultivation to the meanest class, as enabled them to comprehend readily his instructions, on topics which require the learner to have some such previous cultivation of mind. The fishermen of Galilee, who might have been too dull and unimaginative to enter into his various lively forms of instruction, and needful illustrations of the peculiar truths of Christianity, had they been accustomed to no Scripture but such as drily detailed God's laws and judgments, found his teaching, in consequence of this preparation, intelligible and agreeable. Of all the popular Scriptures, none probably were more so than the Psalms of David; and we may observe, accordingly, that out of these come a considerable part of the quotations which he made to them.

Note [D.] Page 36.

D.

Samaritan Canon of Scripture.

Lightfoot (see Horæ Hebraicæ in Joann. IV. 25,) supposes the Samaritans to have made use of the prophetical books of the Jews, only so far as they confirmed the predictions of the Pentateuch; and in this way accounts for the woman of Samaria's adoption of

Appendix. D. Samaritan Canon of Scripture.

the Jewish phrase, in calling the Redeemer "the Messiah." This view derives support from a passage in Justin Martyr, quoted by Beausobre. (Remarques, T. I. p. 152.) Ἰουδαιοῖ τε καὶ Σαμαρεῖς, ἔχοντες τὸν παρὰ Θεοῦ λόγον, διὰ τῶν προφήτων παραδόθεντα αὐτοῖς, κ. τ. λ. And as Justin was himself of Sychem, his authority on this point is so much the greater. (See Bishop Blomfield's note on his "Dissertation upon the Traditional Knowledge of a Promised Redeemer," p. 172, where the views of Lightfoot, Beausobre, Basnage, and others, are noticed.) But after all, why should not the Samaritan woman have accommodated her language to the stranger whom she was addressing, and have called him, whom she expected, by the name which that stranger was known to use? As to Justin's words, διὰ τῶν προφητῶν, they might have been intended to apply to Moses, only as one of the prophets, the class being put for the individual belonging to it. Thus we should still speak of a quotation from *the prophets*, although it were only from one prophet's writings. And, besides, the term prophet, it is well known, is applicable to all those to whom "God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past;" and might, without any forced interpretation, be here understood to mean those who received, and passed on, the several intimations of a Saviour from Adam unto Moses.

The account of theological tenets of the Samaritans must be received with considerable caution, since they are known to us almost entirely through their adversaries the Jews. Attempts have indeed been made to procure a fairer and more unexceptionable statement from an examination of some of the scanty specimens of their literature which are still extant. Professor Gesenius, with this view, published at Leipsic, in 1824, three Samaritan poems from MSS. in the British Museum and the public library of Saxe-Gotha. The sketch of Samaritan doctrine elicited from these, I shall give in his own words.

"Primum Deum unicum esse docent sine socio et consorte—ab humana imbecillitate, humanique corporis similitudine, immunem—partim ratione et ex operibus suis, partim e libro divinitus patefacto cognoscendum—qui totum mundum impleat—cæterum, naturæ a mortalibus non indagandæ—cujus virtutes ante mundum conditum in eo quasi delituerunt, in mundo condendo demum se exseruerunt—Mundum, cujus duas partes esse ponunt, alteram sensibus patentem, alteram spiritualem, angelorumque sedem—Hominem, e pulvere montis Safræ ad imaginem angelorum, non Dei, creatum esse volunt—semel *microcosmum* nuncupant—Angeli qui creaturis opponuntur, potestates mundi occultæ et copiæ divinæ appellantur, quæ semel duntaxat in legislatione in hunc mundum prodierunt—Prorsus repudiatis prophetis sequioribus, qui mendacii disertis verbis insimulantur—Moses omnium temporum propheta, decus prophetiæ, revelationis terminus, Dei amicus et servus familiaris, mundi vortex

sol, corona, salutatur, post ascensum in cœlum in splendore Dei habitaturus—cui prophetia jam in ipsa creatione destinata sit—Legem vero in ipso Hexaëmen creatam, omnium creaturarum principem, vestis divinæ scintillam, mundi cœlestis micam esse volunt[3]—ejusque latæ historiam biblicam mythis imaginibusque poeticis exornant—assidua ejus lectione et accurata observatione homines vitæ æternæ participes fieri statuunt. Ut Sabbathi festum pie celebrent, pios Dei cultores etiam atque etiam admonent, idque religiose colentibus eximia quæque præmia spondent—In fine rerum instare volunt magnum Judicii diem, remissionem peccatorum, et piorum resurrectionem; pios resurrecturos esse, falsos autem prophetas cum cultoribus a resurrectione exclusum iri et igne combustum—De Messia in uno loco eoque dubio agitur."

Appendix. D.

Samaritan Canon of Scripture.

Respecting the argument founded on these poems, if, as Gesenius supposes, they were written at so late a period as the age of Justinian, or (as is more likely) of the Arabian conquerors, they are scarcely a less doubtful guide to the tenets of the Samaritans in our Saviour's day, than the accounts of the Jews, however prejudiced. They bear evident marks of Gnosticism, which probably continued more and more to corrupt the Samaritan faith from the time of Simon Magus. Thus, in the above abstract, we find the Deity described as a subtle nature, filling or pervading all the world; and to the *creatures* of God are opposed certain beings who are called the *powers* of God.[4] In their view of a day of judgment—remission of sins—and resurrection unto life, we may, perhaps, recognise the adoption of the Christian doctrines, which, doubtless, influenced the theological views of many who were not converts to Christianity.

Note [E.] Page 55.

E.

Use of Prophecy.

These two uses of prophecy—*information* and *evidence*—should be carefully distinguished, because a very different character attaches to a prophecy, as it is applied to the one or the other. When the use of a prophecy is to convey anticipated views, which are requisite for those who cannot naturally foresee them, then the prediction requires to be miraculously supported; that is, it requires that its particular application should be pointed out by a messenger divinely and miraculously accredited. Thus, the previous knowledge of a famine which was to take place in Judæa, was needful for the early Christian churches there, and accordingly formed the subject of a prophecy, whose proper use was *information;* and had this prophecy not been made by regularly accredited prophets, such as

[3] These images are probably an allusion to "the glory of the Lord," or the symbol of holy light, which denoted his presence.

[4] Δυναμεῖς, or Æons, such as Simon Magus (who probably first taught this "vain philosophy" to his countrymen) pretended to be, "giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is *the great power of God.*"—Acts viii. 9, 10.

Appendix. E.

Use of Prophecy.

Agabus and his company, no one could have been expected to act on its authority. The event, when it came to pass, would have proved, *then*, indeed, that he who foretold it was inspired; but before the event, no assurance of this sort belonged to the prophecy itself; it required to be authorized by an accredited servant of God.

On the other hand, when the use and intent of a prophecy is *evidence*, then its use begins only with its fulfilment; and that fulfilment is its credential. For instance, the fulfilment of our Lord's prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, became a miraculous evidence of the truth of his pretensions, as strong as any miracle could be, which he wrought during his abode on earth; but its use in this respect did not at all depend on its being recorded, preached, and applied, by persons divinely accredited. All that was requisite was, that it should be known certainly to have been delivered by Jesus. A fulfilled prophecy carries with it its own credentials. Nay more; considered as *evidence*, it would have its character destroyed, by supposing it to be otherwise circumstanced.

This will be very clear if we consider the question, "In what way is a prophecy miraculous evidence? In what respect does it correspond to a testimonial miracle?" Is it not that prophecy is an appeal to the senses in proof of miraculous *knowledge* in the author, just as a sensible miracle is an appeal to the senses in proof of an exercise of miraculous *power* in the agent? Knowing that no human being can raise the dead to life, he who should witness a dead man so raised, would have the evidence of his senses, that miraculous power must have done it. So, too, one who has witnessed the destruction of the Jewish polity and the dispersion of the Jews, being quite sure that there were no human means of foreseeing these events, sees in that destruction and dispersion, a sensible evidence of the miraculous knowledge of him who foretold the events. But if he cannot of himself recognise the fulfilment of the words of Jesus in those events, the events are no more evidence to him, than the raising of the dead man would have been, if he had not seen that he *was* raised. He might indeed, in the case of the raising of the dead, have been assured by another who did see it; but the evidence would be no longer the *original evidence of a sensible miracle*. And so, too, he might give credence to one deserving of it, who should inform him that the destruction of Jerusalem was the fulfilment of certain words of our Lord; but if *he* could not recognise the fulfilment, the *event* would not be itself miraculous evidence. Whatever purpose therefore the information might serve, it could not make the prophecy evidence. Its whole character as such—its whole correspondence to a sensible miracle—depends on the clear recognition by the ordinary human faculties of the complete connexion between the prophecy and the event.

It is generally acknowledged, that the main purpose of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ was that of *evidence*. If

some of them were made to serve another purpose also, yet to the Christian this is apparently the sole purpose. As information, they were useful to those to whom they were delivered; but as evidence only, to us for whom they are fulfilled. But, then, in order to be evidence on which Christ's identity with the promised Messiah is proved, their fulfilment in Christ must be left to be recognised *by our natural faculties.* Otherwise, the appeal to the prophecies as evidence would be idle. For their fulfilment, instead of being considered as proofs, must be considered as a matter to be proved. They thus become a dead weight in the evidence of Christianity, instead of one of the supports.

In short, if the New Testament Scriptures had comprehended amongst its uses the *application* of prophecy, we should have believed its fulfilment on the evidence of the New Testament writers, and not, as was designed, believed in Christianity on the evidence of that fulfilment.

This principle seems to be what St. Peter intends, in his Second Epistle, (chap. i. 20,) where he remarks, that "no Scripture is of private interpretation." The Greek is *ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως*, which is not literally rendered by "private interpretation," the term *ἰδίας* naturally implying something peculiar or proper to that of which the writer is speaking, and that is *προφητεία γραφῆς.*

The apostle had been reminding those to whom he was writing, that their faith rested not on philosophical fables, but on the evidence of eye-witnesses, who saw Christ and his miracles, and heard the voice that declared him to be the beloved Son of God. He then adds, *καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, ᾧ καλῶς ποιεῖτε προσέχοντες, ὡς λύχνῳ φαίνοντι ἐν αὐχμηρῷ τόπῳ, ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα διαυγάσῃ, καὶ φωσφόρος ἀνατείλῃ ἂν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν· τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες, ὅτι πᾶσα προφητεία γραφῆς, ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται, οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπων ἠνέχθη ποτὲ προφητεία, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν οἱ ἅγιοι Θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι.* Now by the expression *ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον*, &c. it is clear, as Wetstein observes on the passage,[5] that the apostle cannot mean to call prophecy a more certain evidence than the sensible manifestations which he had been before mentioning: but that the construction is *ἔχομεν τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον βεβαιότερον.* We (in opposition to former ages) possess the prophecies, rendered more sure evidence; converted by their fulfilment into grounds of belief corresponding to the manifestations and miracles before mentioned. This is the old interpretation put on the passage (see Wetstein as above referred to; who cites likewise a passage, Josephus, B. III. C. 5, where the word *βεβαιότερος* is used somewhat similarly). *We* then possess prophecy, according to St. Peter, converted into sure evidence; and to this evidence he bids us attend, bearing uppermost in our minds that circumstance, on which the

[5] Nov. Test. in loco.

Appendix. E. Use of Prophecy.

character of prophecy as evidence depends, *viz.* its development by the event: οὐκ ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως means, that it is not *its own interpreter*, but is unfolded and established by the event. And this is so, he adds lastly, the prophet not being the author, but God, the sole controller of the event which is to interpret it. "God gave such predictions," observes Sir Isaac Newton, "not to gratify men's curiosity, by enabling them to foreknow things; but that after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event; and his own providence, not that of the interpreter, be then manifested to the world." (Sir Isaac Newton on Daniel and the Apocalypse, 4to. p. 225.)

But, then, it may be urged, do not the New Testament writers quote the prophecies, and point to their fulfilment? Unquestionably they do. All I mean to suggest is, that the *application* of the prophecies makes *no part of revelation;* and that to suppose that it does, destroys the character of the prophecies as evidence. But if the application of the prophecies makes no part of revelation, then the subject falls under the head of those, on which every writer, inspired and uninspired alike, must be supposed to exercise his natural judgment: grant the truth of this, and we should no more expect a Divine interposition to correct the scriptural writer, if on any occasion he was incorrect in quoting and applying a prophecy, than if his quotation had been made from an uninspired author, and merely used as an illustration of his meaning.

It may be added, that we can on no other principle account for the inspired writers not being corrected in the equivocal use of an expression, which could not fail to mislead. It has been asserted by reference to the Rabbinical writers, that the phrase "that it might be fulfilled," and the like, was the customary form of *quotation* with the Jews, when no miraculous fulfilment was intended. Now it seems probable, if this be the case, that many of the quotations which are so introduced by the New Testament writers, are accordingly mere *accommodations*, and were not considered by the writers themselves as prophecies. The vague meaning of the word *prophet* may perhaps have made Christians in after times less willing to take this view of it; because it might seem, that what was said to be written by a prophet, must be meant for a prophecy. But the term prophet included teacher, as well as *predicter*, and prophecy, teaching, as well as foretelling. If then we substitute the word *teacher* for *predicter*, we shall perhaps be better reconciled with the suggestion that assigns many of the quotations of prophecy to the class of illustrations. The Jews had no literature but their Bible, and would of course use it for all purposes of literature. But still granting all this to be true, (which I really think it may be,) is it not certain that the sacred writers, if the application of prophecy were part of their inspired work, would not have left us in doubt, *when* they meant to point out a prophecy, and when to quote by

way of illustration. If the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit extended to this point, could the writers have been allowed to use the same expression in both cases, so as to leave us doubtful in every case? Appendix. E. Use of Prophecy.

Of course, if this view of the application of prophecy be correct, the same reasoning will to a certain extent hold good with respect to the application of the *types* of the Old Testament. To a certain extent, because, like verbal prophecies, the types had other uses besides that of being convertible into evidence by their fulfilment. As verbal prophecy often furnished previous information, so types, or symbolical and histrionic prophecy, moulded the people who employed them to habits of mind, which rendered the truths typified more congenial and more intelligible than they otherwise would have been. This at least was the proper effect of them. But, then, considered *as prophecies fulfilled*, the principle which applies to verbal prophecy, will of course apply here also.

Another scruple which may be felt in admitting this view is this: Are not the prophecies and types used by the inspired writers as grounds for doctrine? and of course they must then at least be considered as infallible in their application. Supposing this granted, it would not affect the character of their quotations in any other case; but even this I should hardly admit. The assertions, indeed, which the apostles maintain, if involving matter of faith or morals, must be held infallible; else there is no rule of faith and conduct in Scripture: but it is no necessary adjunct, that all the means which they adopt to prove the assertion are likewise inspired means. They were assisted indeed in the knowledge and interpretation of prophecy; but so they were in the gift of eloquence and of languages; and yet it did not follow that their eloquence was therefore faultless, or their knowledge of a language always correct. These were aids given them, not resembling the endowments of one *possessed* by a spirit, but like the improvement of the natural faculties of men who remained still free agents, and still responsible, and therefore fallible beings.

The inspired teacher might plead feebly, or he might reason weakly; for what God provided was *the point to be proved*, and the materials of proof, not the use of them. He might use prophecy or miracle amiss; for it was the prophecy or miracle that God gave; in the use of these instruments He only assisted them; and surely no more was needed. As long as the attested record of the miracles remains, as long as those very prophecies are in our hands, we are judges of the application of them, and it is intended that we should be so. See "Inquiry into the Proofs, Nature, and Extent of Inspiration." Fellowes, 1831.

Appendix.
F.
John the Baptist's Embassy to Jesus.

Note [F.] Page 131.

Several conjectures have been offered by commentators on the real object of John Baptist's sending his disciples to Christ with so strange a question as, "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?" Some have ventured to attribute it to a temporary feeling of despondency and discontent in the Baptist, because that he, the Christ's forerunner, was left to pine in prison without any Divine interposition; and they interpret the question, as if it were an expostulation with Jesus. The view most commonly acquiesced in is, that the embassy was contrived for the satisfaction of John's disciples, and not of John himself; but if so, would he have answered them, "*Go and tell John* what things you have heard and seen," &c.?—if so, would John have sent only *two* of his disciples? Some, again, have had recourse to critical niceties and refinements, such as, that John had seen the Spirit *descend* on Jesus, agreeably to the Divine communication made to him, but did not know whether it *abode on* him, which was likewise in the description divinely communicated; and that for his satisfaction in this latter particular it was, the disciples were sent.[6] Mr. Benson, in his Hulsean Lectures, has revived the old interpretation given in the questions and answers which are placed among the works of Justin Martyr, and supposes that the Baptist's object was to ascertain whether the person of whose miracles he heard so much, were the same with Him of whose Messiahship he had formerly received such undoubted proof, and to whom he had borne testimony.[7]

I will not pretend to decide certainly against any one of their conflicting views; only, I cannot but observe that they all proceed on one common principle, itself by no means unquestionable—that *John Baptist's faith could not have failed him.* He had, it is true, been intrusted with the office of proclaiming the Christ's coming; had received evidence that Jesus was He; and had publicly avowed his being satisfied with that evidence. But how many misgivings marked the course of the apostles themselves, after they had confessed Him? Not to mention the repeated instances to be found in their earlier intercourse with Him, on his apprehension they all forsook Him and fled. On the day of His promised return to them, they scrupled not to avow to a supposed stranger the disappointment of their trust, "that it was He who should have redeemed Israel;" and one refused to credit the resurrection on any evidence, ever so strong, except the evidence of his own senses; declaring, that he must first "handle Him with his hands," as well as see Him and hear his voice. And yet, his apostles were always with Him, and the impression of miraculous evidence was in their case continually renewed. John Baptist had not this advantage; why should he

[6] See Sermons by the Rev. Henry Owen, Serm. VII.
[7] Hulsean Lectures for 1810, Lect. III.

then not be troubled with the same weak scruples and misgivings, when he perceived that the course which the ministry of Jesus was taking, was so greatly at variance with that which the learned and the nation at large, with himself doubtless, had looked for in the Messiah, and regarded as part of the evidence in support of his pretensions? John, it is true, had miraculous assurance that Jesus was the Christ, and had submitted his mind to the influence of this evidence: but what then? were not even the apostles so circumstanced; not to mention the many who are recorded as having "gone back and walked no more" with Jesus, after having become his disciples in consequence of what they heard and saw?

It is an important truth, that the strongest possible moral evidence requires perpetually either to be *followed up*, or to be *renewed and refreshed in some way*, in order to be perpetually influential on human conduct. In abstract reasoning, we may prove a proposition once for all, and rest for ever after content, and on every occasion be ready to employ it with the same liveliness of conviction that it is true. Time does not necessarily impair the impression. It is put up in the mind for ever, like an imperishable document, to which we may refer with the same facility to-day and twenty years hence. But in the case of practical truth, *i.e.* truth that is designed to influence our conduct—our impressions of it need perpetual renewal and refreshment; else, although our conduct may continue the same, it is, after a time, not the result of the same principle, but of *custom.* And herein lies the great difference between those two courses of conduct which are distinguished by a great heathen moralist as proceeding the one δι' εθος, and the other δι' ηθος. Virtuous and religious habits are *customs*, but not mere custom; differing from these latter by the original principle (which caused the custom) never being lost sight of. For a Christian to act always from Christian motives, it is quite requisite that he should again and again renew his assurance of the truth of that Revelation which furnishes the motives. In the case of our Lord's immediate followers, this was effected by the repeated display of miracles; and if John needed this revival of the influence of evidence as well as others, (and why should he not?) his absence and imprisonment will readily account for doubts and misgivings such as would prompt an embassy to Jesus. I do not say that such doubts and misgivings were unavoidable; for he might have renewed the evidence once given him, by reflecting on all its bearings; but they were at least as natural and excusable as the doubts and misgivings of the apostles; and were accordingly, like theirs, most promptly relieved by the Saviour. In prison,—his end, apparently, as it was really, approaching,—harassed by the natural misgivings of human infirmity, increased possibly by the desponding and discontented suggestions of his own followers, he might have sent this message to Christ, before his last farewell charge to them; in order, that, with

Appendix. F. John the Baptist's Embassy to Jesus.

the best possible evidence before him, he might satisfy himself and them. Nothing could be more appropriate to this object than the Saviour's display of miracles which formed a ready exposition of the prophecies of Isaiah; and which thereby placed in the hands of the last and most honoured of Israel's prophets, an easy and satisfactory reply to his own doubts, as well as to the doubts of his disciples.

G.

Note [G.] Page 168.

The Pretended Correspondence between our Saviour and the King of Edessa.[8]

THE EPISTLE OF ABGARUS TO OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

Pretended Correspondence between our Saviour and the King of Edessa.

Abgarus, Prince of Edessa, to Jesus the good Saviour, who has appeared in the country about Jerusalem. Health. I have received an account of thee, and thy cures; how, without any medicines, or herbs, they are done by thee. For report says, that thou makest the blind to see, the lame to walk; thou cleansest the lepers, and castest out unclean spirits and devils; and healest those who have laboured under long diseases; and raisest up the dead. And, having heard all this concerning thee, I have concluded with myself, one of these two things: either that thou art God, and that, being come down from heaven, thou doest all these mighty works; or that thou art the Son of God, seeing thou art able to perform these things. Wherefore, by this present letter, I entreat thee to come unto me, and to cure me of the infirmity that lies upon me. For I have also heard that the Jews murmur against thee, and seek to do thee mischief. For I have a small but fair city, which may be sufficient both for thee and me.

THE ANSWER OF OUR SAVIOUR TO ABGARUS.

Abgarus, thou art blessed, in that though thou hast not seen me, thou hast yet believed in me. For it is written concerning me, that those who have seen me should not believe in me; that so they who have not seen me, might believe and live. As for what thou hast written unto me, that I should come to thee; it is necessary that all those things for which I was sent, should be fulfilled by me in this place: and that having fulfilled them, I should be received up to Him that sent me. When therefore I shall be received into heaven, I will send unto thee some one of my disciples, who shall both heal thy distemper, and give life to thee, and to those that are with thee.

8 Archbishop Wake's translation.

Note [H.] Page 170.

Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Certainly if there be any remains of Barnabas's genuine composition in the Epistle which bears his name, nothing can be more unlike it in style and in matter than the Epistle to the Hebrews. The doctrine of the two Epistles is indeed directly at variance; for the Epistle of Barnabas represents the whole ceremonial of the Jewish law as having no meaning but a cabbalistic one; the Epistle to the Hebrews, on the contrary, acknowledges the original import of the law, and points to no secondary meaning in any of its observances, which is not fulfilled in the Christian scheme. Compare, for instance, the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters of the scriptural Epistle, with these extracts from the apocryphal work.

"*Neither shalt thou eat the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the kite, nor the crow;* that is, thou shalt not keep company with such kind of men as know not how, by their labour and sweat, to get themselves food; but injuriously ravish away the things of others, and watch how to lay snares for them; when at the same time they appear to live in perfect innocence."

"*Neither shalt thou eat of the hare.* To what end? To signify this to us: Thou shalt not be an adulterer, nor liken thyself to such persons."

The same observation applies to the use made of the historical facts and events of the Old Testament, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in that commonly called Barnabas's. That many of these facts and events, *besides* their obvious character and import, were also designed by Providence to exhibit a coincidence with facts and events in the Gospel scheme, there is no denying, without questioning the authority of Christ himself. He is recorded to have declared Jonas's fate, a type of his burial and resurrection,—the brazen serpent in the wilderness, a type of his atoning death,—the temple of Jerusalem, an emblem of his body. In St. Paul's undisputed writings, the same tenor of interpretation occurs perpetually. So also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, a designed correspondence is asserted between various facts and events in the old history of God's Church, and certain facts and events in the history of the Christian Church. But then, *this coincidence is never made out to be the only or the primary import of the Old Testament record;* whereas, what is the doctrine of the Epistle of Barnabas? "*And God made in six days the works of his hands, and finished them on the seventh; and he rested the seventh day, and sanctified it.* Consider, my children, what this signifies. The meaning of it is this—that in six thousand years the Lord God will bring all things to an end."

"And he rested the *seventh* day. He meaneth this, that when his Son shall come and abolish the season of the wicked one, and judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then he shall gloriously rest in that seventh day." All

Appendix. H. Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

this is not, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, a statement of certain designed coincidences between the facts and events of the old and new Church histories; but a conversion of the Old Testament history into a mere allegory.[9]

And this distinction deserves the greater notice, because (independently of other internal marks) it proves the impossibility of the Epistle of Barnabas being inspired; while it leaves that to the Hebrews free from all internal evidence against it. Indeed, no alleged proofs of inspiration would be sufficient to authorize an attempt, like that of the author of the Epistle of Barnabas, to convert the scriptural record of real events into mere allegory. And for this reason, the scriptural record, *as a record of facts*, has been itself miraculously attested; and to suppose an Epistle like Barnabas's likewise supported by miraculous proofs of inspiration, would be to suppose a contradiction in the revelation and evidence of God. Such an author should be rejected, on the principle recognised in God's command to the Jews, to stone the prophet who should enjoin idolatry, whatever miracles he might work; and again, in St. Paul's exhortation to those whose faith he had once established on the undoubted testimony of Divine sanction, that though himself—though an angel from heaven—were to preach another doctrine, he was not to be believed.

Deut. xiii.

Gal. i. 8.

No such evidence is indeed now-a-days contended for in the case of Barnabas's Epistle, and the internal evidence against it is probably admitted in its full weight by all who read it. The more needful caution perhaps is, not to confound its character with that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and thereby to suppose the contents of the latter, like that of the former, to be incompatible with inspired authorship. They are not merely *dissimilar*, but in many points *directly opposed*.

With respect to the true authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, all the doubt that hangs over it, may, I think, be removed by a supposition by no means improbable. St. Paul was very unpopular with a large portion of the Christian world,—the converts from Judaism—those who had been Jews, and still retained a prejudice in favour of the eternal obligation of the law. This Epistle bears internal evidence of being written principally for their use. What was more likely, then, than that St. Paul should employ some other person, say Luke, furnish him with the materials, and leave him to write in *his own name* to the Hebrew Christians. And this is

[9] In the genuine Scriptures no allegory is to be found, except where it is avowed, as in parables; there is nothing professing to be history or precept, of which we are at all authorized to doubt the literal truth; although *it may have a typical signification besides*. The expression of our translators, "which things are an allegory," (it should have been, "which things have an allegorical signification," ἐστὶν ἀλληγορούμενα) has perhaps contributed to keep this principle out of sight. When St. Paul compares Hagar to the Jewish Church, and to Mount Sinai, he does not mean to deny the actual existence of her, and Sarah, and Ishmael, and Isaac.

precisely Origen's account of it, who states that the matter is Paul's, the composition and language another's.

Appendix. H.

Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

If this be so, it would certainly follow, that although the pretended author would not, at first, reject his claim to it, yet as the cause of concealment diminished, according to time and place, he would lay aside his title to it, and leave Paul to be conjectured or known as the author. The very Church addressed in the Epistle, would be the *last* probably to hear of the true authorship; and the whole question would thus be for ever involved in obscurity.

Now what is the fact? the style is not altogether St. Paul's, and yet occasionally you meet with expressions, which unquestionably remind you of him, and are so characteristic as scarcely to leave a doubt that they are his. If he supplied the matter and corrected the Epistle, this is just what would have happened.

It has been attributed to Clement, to Luke, and to Barnabas; and all these were at several times *companions* of Paul; this again is likely.

It is said to have been addressed to the Hebrew Christians at Rome; and it was at Rome that its genuineness as an Epistle of Paul was longest doubted. This is likewise what must have taken place.[10]

The notion that it was originally written in Hebrew probably arose from its being written *Hebraice*, not as to its language, but as to its mode of arguing, topics, and the like. For the internal marks of the Greek being the original, are very strong. See Wetstein, Prefatory Remarks on the Epistle in his Greek Testament.

Note [I.][11] Page 172.

I.

Inspiration of Scripture.

Whilst Christians of all denominations have ever agreed in admitting the *inspiration* of the New Testament; on no one point, perhaps, has there been a greater diversity of opinion than on the character of this inspiration. On this diversity of view, one general remark may be hazarded, and it will be found, I think, warranted by historical fact. In proportion as inspiration has been made to approach to a complete inditing of the Scriptures, the Scriptures have been neglected. The consequence of the study and application of the Bible, from the period of the Reformation, has been, gradually and progressively, to limit the extent of inspiration; and by so doing to vindicate the holy character of what is unquestionably of Divine origin, and to make the application of the rule of faith more sure.

It was only, perhaps, in the worst ages of superstition, that an

[10] Many have supposed that it was written from Italy, on account of the expression, "*They of Italy* salute you;" but the Greek words, at least, (οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας,) cannot signify persons *in* Italy, but imply, that they were *out of* Italy. They indicate more; for it is the most natural way in which one writing to Italy would speak of the absent friends and fellow-countryman who were with him.

[11] For a more complete discussion of this subject I must refer to my "Essay on Inspiration;" and to two sermons lately published, with the title of "Scripture, and the Authorized Version of Scripture."

Appendix. I. Inspiration of Scripture.

entire inspiration of matter, words, and composition generally, like that asserted of the Koran, was universally contended for. At the period of the Reformation, Luther placed the first limit on this view, and contended that the matter only was of Divine origin, the composition human. Luther's view was adopted by Beza, Salmasius, and most of the cotemporary divines.

An accident, however, prevented it from being followed up, and even produced a re-action among the reformed. The Romanists caught at the concession, and argued for the necessity of an infallible expositor of a record confessedly composed by human and fallible authorship. Hence most of the divines of the latter end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, abandoned even the advance of Luther's view, and maintained a plenary inspiration. Agreeably to the remark above made, the theology of the Germans, where this point was most carefully maintained, was at that period in its worst state of relapse.[12]

And it is curious to observe how long the sophistical retort of the Romanists continued to operate in checking a revival of the first reformer's tenet. Mosheim, in his lectures on Dogmatic Theology, stirs the subject, with confessed apprehension about a similar result: —"Hæc dissensio inter nos, et inter homines ab ecclesia evangelica alienos, maximi est ponderis atque momenti; neque facile concedi potest hominibus extra ecclesiam nostram constitutis, materiam tantum Sacræ Scripturæ inspiratam esse. Ex hac enim propositione, nude intellecta, consecutiones possunt derivari, periculosæ, et divinæ veritati noxiæ. Eadem vero lis et controversia, si agitetur inter nostræ Ecclesiæ theologos, non magnum habent momentum. Nam ecclesiæ nostræ theologi ita sententiam explicant, ut divinæ auctoritati Sacræ Scripturæ nihil derogetur." Elementa Theologiæ Dogmaticæ, De Princip. Theolog. C. II. Sect. 7.

With the gradual progress of inquiry, however, and the more diligent use of Scripture, a further limitation came in time to be put on scriptural inspiration. It became a question whether even all the *matter* of the Bible was to be considered as having the stamp of Divine truth on it. The progress of natural philosophy made it impossible that any thing but blind superstition should assert this character for all physical facts; and the whole branch of topics which fall under that head, have been accordingly excluded by a great part of Christians. The contrary was, indeed, long maintained by the Romish Church, and is, even now, nominally, and for consistency sake. As Galileo was imprisoned for asserting the motion of the earth round the sun, so the Jesuits, in their admirable edition of Newton's works, were obliged to disavow their belief in the conclusions to which Newton's reasoning led. Among the Protestants, too, the inspiration of all the *matter* of the Bible has not been without its advocates.

[12] See Pusey on the Theology of Germany.

But one portion of the matter of the Bible—its natural philosophy—having been once excluded from the sphere of inspiration, in the view of so many learned and pious Christians, further doubts, on similar grounds, have been suggested respecting the statement of those historical facts which belong not to sacred but to profane history. It has been justly contended that similar difficulties are obviated by excluding profane history, as by excluding natural philosophy; and that there is no more ground for maintaining the inspiration of the sacred writers in the one than in the other case. This view can scarcely yet be said to be generally established; only, perhaps, because it less frequently provokes the question, than the case of physical facts.

It would lead to much more discussion than is compatible with a mere note, to enter into the general question of what further limitations may and ought to be put on the inspired character of Scripture. I will only briefly state, that the following may, perhaps, on reflection, be found not inconsistent with the purest view of God's written word.

It may be fairly questioned, then, first, whether even its *sacred history* is inspired. For although wherever a point of faith or practice is involved in the historical record, inspiration must be supposed, (else the application of the record as an infallible rule must be abandoned,) yet, where this is not the case, there seems to be no necessity for supposing inspiration; and by not supposing it, several difficulties in the attempt to harmonise the sacred historians are removed.

Again, proceeding still on the principle that the truths to be believed,—the material of faith, is the point to which the control or suggestions of inspiration must have been directed, and to which alone it is necessary for constituting the Bible the rule of faith, that it should be directed, *the reasoning* of the inspired writers may be considered safely as their own. I do not mean to impugn the reasoning of any one passage in the apostolical writings; but were any found open to it, the circumstance would not, according to this view, affect the inspired character and authority of the work. The *assertions*, not the *proofs*, are the proper objects of unqualified assent; and provided we believe implicitly all that is proposed by the sacred writers to be believed, it may be fairly questioned whether it be requisite to assent always to the method adopted by them to persuade. This has been already touched on in Note E, page 311, where the application of the prophecies in the Old Testament, by the writers of the New, was considered; and is the view adopted by Burnet in his "Exposition of the XXXIX. Articles." (Art. VI.) "When divine writers argue upon any point, we are always bound to believe the conclusions that these reasonings end in, as parts of Divine revelation; but we are not bound to be able to make out, or even assent to, all the premises made use of by them; unless it

Appendix. I. Inspiration of Scripture.

appears plainly that they affirm the premises as expressly as they do the conclusions proved by them." See also "Paley's Evidences," Vol. II. Part III. Chap. 2, where Burnet's words are quoted, and his view supported.

K.

NOTE [K.] PAGE 172.

Technical Terms in Theology.

Among the internal evidence in favour of this view should be noticed the absence of technical phraseology. For technical terms in theology are evidently the result of deductions from Scripture; and generally mark the view taken by one party of Christians in opposition to another. Thus the words "Trinity," "Person," and the like, have been introduced into the Church vocabulary for the purpose of denoting the orthodox conclusion from the various passages of holy writ out of which the doctrines so expressed are elicited. These terms are, in short, the natural and spontaneous symbola of every uninspired age, in which the interpretation of Scripture is a matter of reasoning and a question. But in the age of inspiration and infallibility, whenever doubts and difficulties arose, the more direct course was to appeal to the inspired and infallible authorities; and thus there was no opportunity or time for the rise of a class of words which are, as it were, the gradual deposit and formation of contested views.

The exceptions too which do occur, in the language of the Apostles' Creed in this respect, are very remarkable. They consist of the latter clauses, "The holy Catholic Church," and "The communion of Saints;" which will appear, from the course of the inquiry, to have been additions made subsequently to the apostolic period. The latter I call an exception, because although the expression is found in the New Testament itself, and therefore not a phrase of the Church's after-devising, yet the *technical* and symbolical *application* of it is; and this indeed is the case with a very large portion of our Church vocabulary. The words have been taken from Scripture, (where they were used originally without reference to any particular heresy or question,) and made a badge of some particular tenet, to which the heresy or dispute has given a prominence. It is certainly allowable for any body of Christians so to employ the Scriptures; and yet perhaps the wiser and more judicious method is the adoption of terms and phrases altogether new. It more clearly marks in the language of Christians the human deductions, as distinguished from the inspired declarations; and if it be said that the human deductions carry more authority when given by scriptural words already sanctified, it is for this reason partly that they are not so proper. We are assuming almost too much when we make Scripture serve not only as the source from which we argue, but as the very deducer of the conclusion. It savours somewhat of the pious frauds of old, which induced some good-intentioned Christians, no doubt, to publish uninspired tracts under the sanction of an apostle's name.

Certain it is, that when the point is discussed, it adds much to the perplexity of the controversy. For the advocate of the doctrine expressed by the scriptural term almost unconsciously defends his position, not merely as if it were a fair conclusion from Scripture, but as if it were the very assertion of inspiration. On the other hand, his opponent is apt to suppose, that he has shown his adversary's assertion to be false, because he has proved it to be not the assertion of Scripture in that very language. I need scarce mention the many instances which must readily occur to every one who remembers how much of this has taken place respecting "justification," "regeneration," "sanctification," and in short every established phrase of the Church which has been expressed in scriptural terms.

On the other hand, it is impossible to deny that objections lie against the coinage or adoption of terms and phrases not scriptural. In neither case, indeed, can the terms be considered fairly as more than arbitrary marks of the *Church's view* of some scriptural doctrines; but then, as some of these scriptural doctrines are and must always be expressed in scriptural phrase, the others may acquire by association an authority and character equal to the scriptural assertions themselves. Whether this might be remedied, by a *change* from time to time of the expressions which mark the orthodox views of the Church, or by any other means, is a question well worthy of consideration.

AUTHORITIES QUOTED,

BESIDES THOSE SPECIALLY REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT AND NOTES.

BARRINGTON (LORD).—Miscellanea Sacra.

BINGHAM.—Ecclesiastical Antiquities.

BRUCKER.—Historia Critica Philosophiæ.

EPIPHANIUS —Petavius's edition, republished at Cologne in 1682.

IRENÆUS.—The folio edition of Grabe, Oxon. 1702.

JUSTIN MARTYR.—The Paris edition of 1636.

KING (LORD).—Critical History of the Apostles' Creed.

KING (LORD).—An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church. By an Impartial Hand.

MOSHEIM.—De Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum Magnum.

SCLATER.—[His Reply to Lord King's Enquiry.] An Original Draught of the Primitive Church, in answer to a Discourse, entitled, "An Enquiry," &c. By a Presbyter of the Church of England.

WARBURTON (BISHOP).—Divine Legation of Moses.

WHATELY (ARCHBISHOP).—Essays, and other publications.

INDEX.

ABGARUS, king of Edesse, his pretended correspondence with Christ, 167, 314.
Acts of the Apostles, plan and object of the history, 152.
Æons, what the Gnostics meant by the term, 184.
Agapæ, or Love Feasts, 261.
Alexander and Hymenæus, the probable character of their punishment, 141.
Allegorizing of Pagan Mythology, 304.
Ananias and Sapphira, their case, 83.
Andrew, (apostle,) his ministry, 167.
Apologies, one of the Church's means of self-preservation, 286.
Apollos, one of John Baptist's disciples, baptized into the Church, 131.
Apostles, their appointment and office, 63, 79.
  What parts of their ministry designed for the mere foundation of Christianity, 194.
  What parts designed for the perpetuation of Christianity, 200.
Apostolical Fathers, who entitled to this character, 191.
Apostolical Succession.
Assemblies, (Christian,) where held and how, 80, 89.
  Who composed them, 145.
Astrology, origin of, 12.
Atonement why an unacceptable doctrine to the Gentiles, 21.
  Why to the Jews, 34.
Augury, origin of, 12.

Babel, what the object of the building, and what the confusion which ensued, 2.
Baptism, its institution and meaning, 43.
  How administered in the primitive Church, 255.
Barnabas, probably the same with Joses Barsabas, 74.
  When appointed an Apostle, 82.
  Why called, the Son of Consolation, *ibid.*
  His separation from Paul, 117.
  His after ministry, 169.
  His pretended Epistle, *ibid.*
  Whether he can be classed among the Apostolical Fathers, 191.
Bartholomew, (the apostle,) his ministry, 168.
  His death, 289.
Bishops, an Apostolical order, 146.
  Why once called angels, 147.
  By what authority appointed, 176.
  Their office and jurisdiction, 233.
  Catalogue of those apostolically ordained, 237.

Canon of the New Testament, 224.
Catechisms, Catechists, Catechumens, 250.
Cerinthus, his heresy, 186.
Church, character and design of the institution, 200.
  Its four offices, 203.
  Not one society, 204.
  Its spirituality, 206.
  Its universality, *ibid.*
  Its unity, 207.
  Its authority, 208.
  Of Jerusalem, 243.
  Of Rome, 245.
  Of Alexandria, 250.
  Sacramental character of the Church, 253.
  The term (ἐκκλησία) personified by the Gnostics, 187.
Christians, (first application of the name,) 102.
Christianity, distinctions in it as taught by Christ and by his apostles, 56.
  Several Stages of it, 60.

Christianity, provisions for establishing and for perpetuating it, 199.
Claudius, (emperor,) his reign favourable to the progress of Christianity, 158.
Clement, (Apostolical Father,) his history, 191.
His testimony to the Canon of Scripture, 220.
His martyrdom, 289.
Collections for the poor of Judæa, 134.
Colossians, Epistle to, why written and when, 154.
Coming of Christ, what meant by it, 47, 147.
Community of goods among the primitive Christians, 83.
Confirmation, consisted originally in some spiritual gift, 77.
The sign of insensible spiritual influence, 91.
Why the rite was observed after sensible miracles had ceased, 197.
Converts, to Christianity of three kinds, and for a season differently treated, 61, 69, 81.
Corinthians, First Epistle to, when written, 130.
Second Epistle, when written, 143.
Council of Jerusalem, 108.
Creeds, one of the Church's means of self-preservation, 272.
Apostles' Creed, *ibid.*

Deacons, their appointment and office, 86.
Deaconesses, 85.
Why needed in the primitive Church, 233.
How long the order existed, *ibid.*
Decree of the Council of Jerusalem, 108.
Demetrius and the Craftsmen, 142.
Devout Gentiles, who they were, 69.
When first preached to, 95.
Disciples, the seventy, their appointment and office, 64.
Discipline, its disuse in our Church, 142.
Its maintenance in the primitive Church, 282.
Docetæ, their errors opposed in the Apostles' Creed, 276.
Domitian, his persecution of the Church, 182.
Dositheus, his character, 186.
Dreams, one of the modes of Divine communication, 120.
How inspired dreams were distinguished from others, 121.

Eclectics, (a sect of philosophers,) 15.
Egyptian idolatry, 6.
Egyptians of Thebais worshippers of Cneph, 303.
Elect, application of the term to the Gentile converts, 163.
Election, forms of, 89.
Ephesians, Epistle to, why written and when, 154.
Epicurean philosophy, 14.
Episcopacy, origin of, 146.
Epistles, official, 236.
Esoteric and Exoteric, what meant by the terms, 10, 14.
Essenes, 29.
Eucharist, its institution and meaning, 43.
How administered in the primitive Church, 258.
Evil being, why called a spirit, 125.
His dealings with mankind, 126.
Excommunication, an inherent right of every society, 137.
The proper penalty for ecclesiastical offences, 141, 283.
What communication it prohibits, *ibid.*
Extraordinary offices in the apostolic Church, 198.

Faith, why Christianity emphatically called the faith, 18.
Fate, Gentile view of it, 12.
Future state, why no part of the early revelation to the Jews, 5.
Disbelieved by the Gentiles, 9, 16, 22.
Gradually revealed, but imperfectly comprehended under the Old Testament dispensation, 34.

Genealogies, what the "endless genealogies" of St. Paul meant, 184.
Gentiles, origin of their religion, 2.
Varieties of it, 6.
Effect of the fine arts on it, 7.
The supports of it, 9.
What parts of Christianity were congenial to their prejudices, and what opposed to them, 18.

Gentiles, their alleged expectation of a Messiah, 18.
Gifts, spiritual, 78.
Glory of the Lord, what meant by it, 139.
Gnosticism, character and origin of, 184.

Heresy, how distinguished from schism, 179.
An offence against some particular Church by its own member, 180.
Heretics, 182.
Hermas, (apostolical Father,) his history, 191.
Holy Ghost, descent of, 74.
Various manifestations of, 75.
Second descent, 81.
Sin against the Holy Ghost, 85.
Homer, his phantasmagoria, 9.
Why made to do penance in hell by Pythagoras, and pronounced dangerous by Plato, 9.
Horsley, (Bishop,) his view of the Gentile expectation of a Messiah, 18.
Houses of prayer, 145.

Idolatry, origin of, 4.
Its influence on the conceptions of the Divine nature, 7.
How the Jews were cured of it, 25.
Idolaters, when first preached to, 105.
Second mission to them, 118.
Ignatius, (apostolical Father,) his history, 192.
His testimony to the canon of Scripture, 221.
His martyrdom, 288.
Immanuel, the word a proof of Christ's Divine nature, 33.
Incarnation, the doctrine not unacceptable to the Gentiles, 21.
Nor to the Jews, 36.
Difference between the Christian doctrine, and the heathen notion of a god assuming the human character, 21.
Inspiration, the character and limits of it, 114.
Instinctive impulses, one of the modes of Divine communication, 120.

James, the Less, his ministry and death, 165.
James, the brother of John, his ministry and death, 166.
Jerusalem, its destruction the proper sign of the Messiah's reign, 32.
St. Paul's last recorded visit, 149.
Jesus Christ, character of his ministry, 37.
His example, 38.
His teaching, 40.
His miracles, 41.
His institutions, 42.
Distinction between his ministry and that of the apostles, 61.
His preparations for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, 62.
Jews, in what their idolatry consisted, 2.
Character and intent of their religion, 23.
Twofold object of their Scriptures, 304.
Effects of their settlement in Egypt, 25.
Their wide dispersion, and the benefits accruing from it, both to them and to the Gentiles, 25.
Influence of their traditions, 26.
Their malignant character for a time, and the cause of it, 159.
John, (Baptist,) the object of his mission, 29.
Why expected to "restore all things," 30.
His embassy to Jesus, 312.
His disciples found by St. Paul at Ephesus, 132.
His baptism, how differing from the baptism of Jesus, *ibid.*
John, (apostle,) meaning of our Lord's promise to him, 47, 147.
His ministry and writings, 173.
Expressions in the beginning of his Gospel, allusions to heretical opinions, 184.
Jude, (apostle,) his ministry, 167.

Knowledge, (religious,) its true character and limits, 291.
What meant by "the knowledge falsely so called," 184.

Lord's Prayer, for whom, and with what intent composed, 66.
Love, peculiar meaning of the word among the early Christians, 263.
Luke, Paul's companion, 153.
Character of his writings, 172.

Manifestation, what meant by a Divine manifestation, 75.
Various modes of, 120.
Marcionites, their heresy respecting Christ's body, 277.
Mark, (Evangelist,) his desertion of Paul and Barnabas, 107.
His reconciliation to St. Paul, 117.
His Gospel, 171.
Its inspired character, *ibid.*
Martyrdom, its true object and use, 287.
Matthew, (apostle,) 171.
Matthias, (apostle,) his appointment, 72.
His ministry, 170.
Mediator, whether the term was ever misapplied by the primitive Church, 231.
Menander, (an impostor,) his history, 185.
Messiah, mistaken views of him entertained by the Jews, 30.
Ministers, (Christian,) their character and various titles, 230.
Fund for their maintenance, 237.
Miracles performed by Christ, 41.
Why faith made a requisite in one on whom a miracle was wrought, 42.
Distinction between the miracles of Christ and those of all others, 57.
When miracles ceased, 91.
Inconsistent with an *established* and *final* dispensation, 195.
Miracle on the attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, 196.
Credit and character of those omitted in the Scripture record, 169, 174.
Missionaries, 240.
Moral discipline of the primitive Church, 281.
Philosophy of the heathen, how far improved by the Gospel, 20.
Code of the Jews, how affected by the Gospel revelation, 113.
Mysteries, heathen, why they were instituted, 10.

Name, peculiar use of the term in Scripture, 63.
Nathanael, (see Bartholomew.)
Neronian persecution, 158.
New Testament Scriptures, their character and design, 200.
Omnipresent, what meant by the term when applied to God, 123.
Onesimus, St. Paul's Epistle respecting him, 155.
His martyrdom, 282.
Oracles, their origin, 173.
Cause of their extinction, 174.
Order of the altar, whence the phrase, 231.
Orders in the Church, 144.
Ordination of ministers, 269.
Oriental philosophy, 15, 188.
Ὀρθοτομοῦντα, what St. Paul meant by the word in 2 Tim. ii. 15, 230.

Paraclete, (Παράκλητος,) why the Holy Ghost so called, 113, 114.
Paul, (apostle,) his conversion, 88.
How often he visited Jerusalem after that event, 102.
His revelation and appointment, 103.
His *first* apostolical journey, 105.
His embassy from Antioch to Jerusalem, 108.
His rebuke of Peter, 117.
His separation from Barnabas, *ibid.*
His *second* apostolical journey, 118.
At Troas, 119.
Exorcism of a pythoness, 126.
At Athens, 127.
At Corinth, 130.
At Cenchræa, *ibid.*
His *third* apostolical journey, 131.
His meeting with some disciples of John the Baptist, *ibid.*
Why so earnest in making collections for the poor brethren of Judæa, 134.
His connexion with the Corinthians, 135.
His interview with the Ephesian presbyters, 143.
His after journey and persecution at Jerusalem, 149.
His *fourth* apostolical journey, 152.
His imprisonment at Rome, 153.
Benefits accruing to his ministry from his being so sent to Rome, *ibid.*
And also, from the length and the accidents of his voyage, 154.
His behaviour respecting Onesimus, 155.

Paul, his release from prison and subsequent course, 155.
His *fifth* apostolical journey, 157.
His death, 161.
His claim to be considered as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 317.
Penance, what it originally meant, 284.
Persecution, under Nero, 158.
Under Domitian, 175, 289.
Under Trajan, 289.
Causes of, 158.
Person, three Persons of the Godhead, 125.
Peter, to whom his First Epistle was addressed, 163.
Why sent with John to Samaria, 91.
Why made so prominent in the early part of the Acts, 96, 163.
What part he probably had in founding the Church at Rome, 165.
Pharisees, their character and tenets, 27.
Philemon, 155.
Philip, (apostle,) his life and ministry, 169.
Philip, (deacon,) his ministry in Samaria, 90.
His conversion of the Ethiopian, eunuch, 92.
His history confounded with that of Philip the apostle, 176.
Philippians, Epistle to, when written and why, 154.
Philosophy, character of it at the Advent, 15.
Subversive of the Gentile religion, 17.
In what respects favourable and in what unfavourable, to the establishment of Christianity, 20.
"Vain philosophy," what meant by it, 184.
Pilate, his report of the crucifixion, and his banishment, 158.
Plato, why he censured the use of poetry in education, 9.
Platonists, 25.
Pleroma, (πλήρωμα,) how applied by the Gnostics, 186.
Pliny's correspondence with Trajan respecting the Christians, 291.
Poetry, its influence on the religion of the Gentiles, 8.
Polycarp, (apostolical Father,) his history, 193, 293.
His testimony to the canon of the New Testament, 222.
Polytheism, originally not implying a disbelief in Jehovah, 3.
Preaching, the custom in the primitive Church, 234.
Presbyters, the origin and character of the order in the Church, 144.
Priest, twofold meaning of the word, 231.
Prophecy, whence the prophecies relating to a Messiah dispersed among the heathen, 18.
Why the Jews misinterpreted the Scripture prophecies relating to him, 31.
Christ's prophecies designed for instruction as well as for evidence, 43.
Prophecy, Christ's prophecy concerning the Church, 43.
St. Peter, 46.
St. John, 47.
Judas Iscariot, *ibid.*
Nathanael, 49.
The thief on the cross, *ibid.*
The destruction of Jerusalem, 82.
Use and application of prophecy, 307.
What meant by its not being of "private interpretation," 310.
Proselytes of the gate, distinguished from proselytes of righteousness, 70, 180.
Protestants, their separation from the Church of Rome not a schism, 182.
Pythagoras, why he imagined Homer and Hesiod in purgatory, 9.

Quadratus, his apology, 286.
Quotations from Scripture, one of the means of preserving and attesting the Sacred Record, 219.

Reading the Scriptures publicly, one of the primitive modes of preserving and attesting the Sacred Record, 217.
Reformation of the Church, its true principle, 116.
Character of the Reformation, 181.
Revelation, various modes of, 120.
Revelations, the book of, 175.
Rites, Christian, 254.

Romans, when and why St. Paul wrote his Epistle to them, 143.
Rome, St. Paul's imprisonment there, 153.
History of the early Church there, 245.

Sacraments, their character and meaning, 43.
Why instituted by Christ himself, 65.
Line of distinction between the sacraments and all other Christian rites, 254.
How observed in the primitive Church, 255.
Sadducees, their character and tenets, 28.
Samaritans, their history, 35.
In what respects more enlightened than the Jews, 36.
Their canon of Scripture, 305.
Their theology, 306.
Satan, what meant by delivery unto Satan, 141.
Schism, in what it consists, 179.
Schools, among the primitive institutions for dispensing Christian knowledge, 250.
Scripture, character of its inspiration, 114, 172, 317.
Publicly read, 234.
Sculpture, its effect on the religion of the Gentiles, 7.
Serenius Granianus, his letter to the emperor Hadrian, 292.
Shechinah, or glory of the Lord, its analogy to Christ, 123; and to the manifestation of God by the Holy Spirit, 139.
Sibylline oracles, whether any of them related to the Messiah, 18.
Silas, St. Paul's companion, 118.
Simon Magus, 184.
Simon Zelotes, (apostle,) his ministry, 169.
Slavery, why not forbidden in the preaching and writings of the apostles, 155.
Spain, visited by St. Paul, 156.
Spirit, (Holy,) His office and relation to the Church, 56—67.
Descent on the day of Pentecost, 74.
Modes of communication, 75.
Gifts of the Spirit, 77.
Spirit, gifts of the, peculiar to the apostles, 79.
Second extraordinary manifestation, 81.
Distinction between the ordinary and extraordinary agency, 105.
Proof that the ordinary agency is still continued, 107.
The temple of the Holy Spirit, 138.
Spirit, (Evil,) why called a spirit, 125.
His ordinary and his extraordinary agency, *ibid.*
Spirituality one of the characteristics of the Church, 206.
Stephen, (his martyrdom,) 90.
Stoics, their doctrine concerning fate, 12.
The local existence of the Deity, 17.
Strangers, (παρεπιδήμοι) who meant by the expression in the first chapter of St. Peter's First Epistle, 163.
Symbolical interpretation of Scripture, 55.
Character of Christ's miracles, 58.
Symeon, his appointment to be bishop of Jerusalem, 243.
His martyrdom, 245.

Technical terms in theology, 320.
Temple of the Holy Ghost, 147.
Typified by the temple of Jerusalem, *ibid.*
Temptation of Christ, 52.
Thomas, (apostle,) his life and ministry, 167.
His martyrdom, 289.
Tiberius, (emperor,) his government of the Christians, 158.
Timothy, why circumcised by St. Paul, 130.
His appointment and ministry, 176.
Titus, (St. Paul's companion,) why St. Paul refused to circumcise him, 130.
His appointment and ministry, 176.
Tongues, gift of, 78.
Traditions, Jewish, their origin and character, 26.
Trajan, (the emperor,) his behaviour to the Christians, 290.
Trinity, why not a difficult doctrine to the Gentile converts, 22.

Truth, why applied peculiarly to the Christian religion, 18
Personification of the Christian term by the Gnostics, 187.

Unction of the sick in the primitive Church, 197.
Universality, one of the characteristics of the Christian Church, 206.
Unity, Christian, what meant by it, 179.
One of the characteristics of the Church, 205.
Unknown God, what meant by the inscription on the altar at Athens, 128.

Vicar of Christ, whence the phrase, 231.
Virgil's sixth book of the Æneid, 8. Pollio, 20.
Visions, a mode of Divine Revelation, 120.
Voices, a mode of Divine Revelation, 120.

Warburton's Account of the heathen Mysteries, 10.
Widows, deaconesses originally so called, 85, 233.
Witnesses, the primary character of the apostles, 63.
Word of God, how the scriptural term was personified by the gnostics, 187.

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

PLINY THE CONSUL AND THE EMPEROR TRAJAN,

RESPECTING

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

FROM THE TRANSLATION BY WILLIAM MELMOTH.

MEMOIR OF PLINY THE YOUNGER.

BY THE LATE THOMAS ARNOLD, D.D.

C. Plinius Cæcilius Secundus was born at or near Comum, about the sixth year of the reign of Nero, or A.D. 61. His mother was a sister of C. Plinius, the Natural Historian; and as he lost his father at an early period, he removed with her to the house of his uncle, with whom he resided for some years, and was adopted by him, and, consequently, assumed his name in addition to his parental one, Cæcilius. He appears to have been of a delicate constitution, and even in his youth to have possessed little personal activity and enterprise; for at the time of the famous eruption of Vesuvius, when he was between seventeen and eighteen, he continued his studies at home, and allowed his uncle to set out to the mountain without him. In Literature, however, he made considerable progress, according to the estimate of those times: he composed a Greek Tragedy when he was only fourteen, and wrote Latin verses on several occasions throughout his life; he attended the Lectures of Quinctilianus, and some other eminent Rhetoricians, and assiduously cultivated his style as an elegant writer and an Orator. In this latter capacity he acquired great credit, and to this cause he was probably indebted for his Political advancement. He went through the whole succession of public offices from that of *Quæstor* to the high dignities of *Consul* and *Augur*, and was so esteemed by Trajanus as to be selected by him for the Government of Bithynia, because there were many abuses in that Province, which required a man of ability and integrity to remove them. The trust so honourably committed to him he seems to have discharged with great fidelity; and the attention to every branch of his duties, which his Letters to Trajanus display, is peculiarly praiseworthy in a man of sedentary habits, and accustomed to the enjoyments of his villas, and the stimulants of Literary glory at Rome. His character as a husband, a master, and a friend, was affectionate, kind, and generous; he displayed also a noble liberality towards his native town Comum, by forming a public library there, and devoting a yearly sum of 300,000 sesterces for ever to the maintenance of children born of free parents who were Citizens of Comum. A man like Plinius, of considerable talents and learning, possessed of great wealth, and of an amiable and generous disposition, was sure to meet with many friends, and with still more who would gratify his vanity by their praises and apparent admiration of his abilities. But as a writer he has done nothing to entitle him to a very high place in the judgment of posterity. His *Panegyric* of Trajanus belongs to a class of compositions, the whole object of which was to produce a striking effect, and it must not aspire to any greater reward. It is ingenious and eloquent, but by its very nature it gives no room for the exercise of the highest faculties of the mind, nor will its readers derive from it any more substantial benefit than the pleasure which a mere elegant composition can afford. His *Letters* are valuable to us, as all original Letters of other times must be, because they necessarily throw much light on the period at which they were written. But many of them are ridiculously studied, and leave the impression, so fatal to our interest in the perusal of such compositions, that they were written for the express purpose of publication. In short, the works of Plinius, compared with the reputation which he enjoyed among his contemporaries, seem to us greatly to confirm the view which we have taken of the inferiority of the Literature of this period, and of the unworthy notions which were entertained of its proper excellence.

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

PLINY AND THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.*

PLINY TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

It is a rule, Sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for who is more capable of removing my scruples, or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials concerning those who profess Christianity, I am unacquainted not only with the nature of their crimes, or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter into an examination concerning them. Whether therefore any difference is usually made with respect to the ages of the guilty, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance entitles them to a pardon; or if a man has been once a Christian, it avails nothing to desist from his error; whether the very profession of Christianity, unattended with any criminal act, or only the crimes themselves inherent in the profession are punishable; in all these points I am greatly doubtful. In the mean while, the method I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as Christians, is this: I interrogated them whether they were Christians? If they confessed, I repeated the question twice again, adding threats at the same time; when, if they still persevered, I ordered them to be immediately punished: for I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation, but being citizens of Rome, I directed them to be carried thither. But this crime spreading (as is usually the case) while it was actually under prosecution, several instances of the same nature occurred. An information was presented to me without any name subscribed, containing a charge against several persons, who upon examination

* Pliny's Letters, Book X., Letters 97, 98.

denied they were Christians, or had ever been so. They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and frankincense before your statue; (which for this purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods,) and even reviled the name of Christ: whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians, into a compliance with any of these articles: I thought proper therefore to discharge them. Some among those who were accused by a witness in person, at first confessed themselves Christians, but immediately after denied it; while the rest owned indeed that they had been of that number formerly, but had now (some above three, others more, and a few above twenty years ago) forsaken that error. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, throwing out imprecations at the same time against the name of Christ. They affirmed, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they met on a certain stated day before it was light, and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some God, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which, it was their custom to separate, and then re-assemble, to eat in common a harmless meal. From this custom, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I forbade the meeting of any assemblies. After receiving this account, I judged it so much the more necessary to endeavour to extort the real truth, by putting two female slaves to the torture, who were said to administer in their religious functions; but I could discover nothing more than an absurd and excessive superstition. I thought proper therefore to adjourn all farther proceedings in this affair, in order to consult with you. For it appears to be a matter highly deserving your consideration; more especially as great numbers must be involved in the danger of these prosecutions, this inquiry having already extended, and will still extend, to persons of all ranks and ages, and even of both sexes. For this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the country villages: nevertheless, it still seems possible to remedy this evil and restrain its progress. The temples, at least, which were once almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are again revived; while there is a general demand for the victims, which for some time past have met with but few purchasers. From hence it is easy to imagine, what numbers might be reclaimed from this error, if a pardon were granted to those who shall repent.

THE EMPEROR TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in the proceedings against those Christians which were brought before you, is extremely proper: as it is not possible to lay down any fixed plan by which to act in all cases of this nature. But I would not have you officiously enter into any inquiries concerning them. If indeed they should be brought before you, and the crime is proved, they must be punished; with this restriction, however, that where the party denies himself to be a Christian, and shall make it evident that he is not, by invoking our gods, let him, (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. Information without the accuser's name subscribed, ought not to be received in prosecutions of any sort; as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the equity of my government.

THE LIFE

OF

APOLLONIUS TYANÆUS:

WITH A COMPARISON

BETWEEN

THE MIRACLES OF SCRIPTURE

AND THOSE ELSEWHERE RELATED,

AS REGARDS

THEIR RESPECTIVE OBJECT, NATURE, AND EVIDENCE.

By JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B.D.,

ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

CONTENTS.

LIFE OF APOLLONIUS TYANÆUS.

PAGE

His Life written by Philostratus, with the object of bringing him forward as a rival to the Author of the Christian Religion, ... 341
His Birth and Education, ... 342
He adopts the Pythagorean Philosophy, ... 342
His travels in Asia, Greece, Rome, Spain, Egypt, Æthiopia, &c. . . 342
His Death, ... 347
Miraculous Pretensions not made by himself, ... 349
Enumeration of his Pretended Miracles, ... 349
Real Nature of his Pretensions, ... 351
His Story an Imitation of Scripture, ... 354

THE MIRACLES OF SCRIPTURE COMPARED WITH THOSE RELATED ELSEWHERE, AS REGARDS THEIR RESPECTIVE OBJECT, NATURE, AND EVIDENCE.

I.—On the Nature and General Uses of Miracles, ... 356

II.—On the Antecedent Credibility of a Miracle, considered as a Divine Interposition, ... 360

Tests derived from our Knowledge of the Divine Attributes, by which all but Scripture Miracles are excluded, ... 367
1. Those which are not even referred by the workers of them to Divine Agency, ... 367
2. Those which are unworthy of an All-wise Author, . . 368
3. Those which have no professed object, ... 370
4. Those which are exceptionable as regards their object, . . 372
Conclusion of the Antecedent question, ... 376

III.—On the Criterion of a Miracle, considered as a Divine Interposition, ... 377

Tests between Real and Apparent Miracles, deduced from the Definition of the Term, ... 380
The Term Miracle defined, ... 380

PAGE

The Facts which have no title to the name *Miracle*, are:—
1. Those which may be referred to Misstatement in the Narration, 380
2. Those which from suspicious circumstances attending them may not unfairly be referred to an unknown Physical cause, 381
3. Those which may be referred to the supposed operation of a Cause known to exist, ... 383

Observations on the foregoing Tests, ... 385

IV.—On the Direct Evidence for the Christian Miracles, . 386

The Scripture Miracles have far stronger evidence in their favour than other Professed Miracles, though they do not *require* evidence equally strong, ... 387

What kind of Testimony is to be required for a Miracle, . . . 387
1. The Testimony must be *honest*, ... 389
2. And *competent*, ... 390

Tests relative to these Qualities, ... 391

Observations on the foregoing Tests, ... 396

View of the Complete Evidence for the Scripture Miracles, . . . 396

Union of Testimony with Antecedent Probability, ... 397

THE LIFE OF

APOLLONIUS TYANÆUS.

From A.C. 4, to A.D. 96.

Apollonius born A.C. 4

APOLLONIUS, the Pythagorean philosopher, was born at Tyana, in Cappadocia, in the year of Rome 750, four years before the common Christian era.[1] His reputation has been raised far above his personal merits, by the attempt made in the early ages of the Church, and since revived,[2] to bring him forward as a rival to the Author of our Religion. His life was written with this object, about a century after his death, by Philostratus of Lemnos, when Ammonius was systematizing the Eclectic tenets to meet the increasing influence of the Christian doctrines. Philostratus engaged in this work at the instance of his patroness Julia Domna, wife of the Emperor Severus, a princess celebrated for her zeal in the cause of Heathen Philosophy; who put into his hands a journal of the travels of Apollonius rudely written by one Damis, an Assyrian, his companion.[3] This manuscript, an account of his residence at Ægæ, prior to his acquaintance with Damis, by Maximus of that city, a collection of his letters, some private memoranda relative to his opinions and conduct, and lastly the public records of the cities he frequented, were the principal documents from which Philostratus compiled his elaborate narrative, which is still extant.[4] It is written with considerable elegance, but with more ornament and attention to the composition than is consistent with correct taste. Though it is not a professed imitation of the Scripture history of Christ, it contains quite enough to show that it was written with a view of rivalling it; and accordingly, in the following age, it was made use of in a direct attack upon Christianity by Hierocles,[5] Præfect of Bithynia, a disciple of the Eclectic School, to whom a reply was written by Eusebius of Cæsarea. The selection of a Pythagorean Philosopher for the purpose of a comparison with Christ was judicious. The attachment of the Pythagorean Sect to the discipline of the established religion, which most

His life written by Philostratus.

[1] Olear. ad Philostr. I. 12.
[2] By Lord Herbert and Mr. Blount.
[3] Philostr. I. 3.
[4] Ibid. I. 2, 3.
[5] His work was called Λόγοι Φιλαλήθεις πρὸς Χριστιανούς· on this subject see Mosheim, *Dissertat. de turbatâ per recentiores Platonicos Ecclesiâ*, Sec. 25.

other Philosophies neglected; its austerity, its pretended intercourse with heaven, its profession of extraordinary power over nature, and the authoritative tone of teaching which this profession countenanced,[6] were all in favour of the proposed object. But with the plans of the Eclectics in their attack upon Christianity we have no immediate concern.

Birth and education.

Philostratus begins his work with an account of the prodigies attending the Philosopher's birth, which with all circumstances of a like nature, we shall for the present pass over, intending to make some observations on them in the sequel. At the age of fourteen he was placed by his father under the care of Euthydemus, a distinguished rhetorician of Tarsus; but being displeased with the dissipation of that city, he removed with his master to Ægæ, a neighbouring town, frequented as a retreat for students in philosophy.[7] Here he made himself master of the Platonic, Stoic, Epicurean, and Peripatetic systems; giving, however, an exclusive preference to the Pythagorean, which he studied with Euxenus of Heraclea, a man whose life ill accorded with the ascetic principles of his Sect. At the early age of sixteen years, according to his Biographer, he resolved on strictly conforming himself to the precepts of Pythagoras, and, if possible, rivalling the fame of his master. He renounced animal food and wine; restricted himself to the use of linen garments, and sandals made of the bark of trees; suffered his hair to grow; and betook himself to the temple of Æsculapius, who is said to have regarded him with peculiar favour.[8]

He adopts the Pythagorean Philosophy.

On the news of his father's death, which took place not long afterwards, he left Ægæ for his native place, where he gave up half his inheritance to his elder brother, whom he is said to have reclaimed from a dissolute course of life, and the greater part of the remainder to his poorer relatives.[9]

Prior to composing any Philosophical work, he thought it necessary to observe the silence of five years, which was the appointed initiation into the esoteric doctrines of his Sect. During this time he exercised his mind in storing up materials for future reflection. We are told, that on several occasions he hindered insurrections in the cities in which he resided, by the mute eloquence of his look and gestures;[10]—a fact, however, which we are able to trace to the invention of his Biographer, who, in his zeal to compare him to his master, forgot that the disciples of the Pythagorean school denied themselves during their silence the intercourse of mixed society.[11]

Travels.

The period of silence being expired, Apollonius passed through the principal cities of Asia Minor, disputing in the Temples in imitation of Pythagoras, unfolding the mysteries of his Sect to such as were observing their probationary silence, discoursing with the

[6] Philostr. I. 17, VI. 11. [7] Ibid. I. 7. [8] Ibid. I. 8. Apollon. Epist. 50.
[9] Ibid. I. 13. [10] Ibid. I. 14, 15. [11] Brucker, Vol. II. p. 104.

Greek Priests about divine rites, and reforming the worship of Barbarian cities.[12] This must have been his employment for many years; the next incident in his life being his Eastern journey, which was not undertaken till he was between forty and fifty years of age.[13]

His object in this expedition was to consult the Magi and Brachmans on philosophical subjects; in which he but followed the example of Pythagoras, who is said to have travelled as far as India for the same purpose. At Nineveh, where he arrived with two companions, he was joined by Damis, already mentioned as his journalist.[14] Proceeding thence to Babylon, he had some interviews with the Magi, who rather disappointed his expectations; and was well received by Bardanes the Parthian King, who, after detaining him at his Court for the greater part of two years, dismissed him with marks of peculiar honour.[15] From Babylon he proceeded to Taxila, the seat of Phraotes, King of the Indians, who is represented as an adept in the Pythgorean Philosophy;[16] and passing on, at length accomplished the object of his expedition by visiting Iarchas, Chief of the Brachmans, from whom he is said to have learned many valuable theurgic secrets.[17]

Travels in India.

On his return to Asia Minor, after an absence of about five years, he stationed himself for a time in Ionia; where the fame of his travels and his austere mode of life procured considerable attention to his philosophical harangues. The cities sent embassies to him, decreeing him public honours; while the oracles pronounced him more than mortal, and referred the sick to him for relief.[18]

From Ionia he passed over to Greece, and made his first tour through its principal cities;[19] visiting the temples and oracles, reforming the divine rites, and sometimes exercising his theurgic skill. Except at Sparta, however, he seems to have attracted little attention. At Eleusis his application for admittance to the Mysteries was unsuccessful; as was, at a later period of his life, a

Travels in Greece.

12 Philostr. I. 16.

13 See Olear. *præfat. ad vitam.* As he died, U.C. 849, he is usually considered to have lived to a hundred. Since, however, here is an interval of almost twenty years in which nothing important happens, in a part of his life too unconnected with any public events to fix its chronology, it is highly probable that the date of his birth is put too early. Philostratus says, that accounts varied, making him live eighty, ninety, or one hundred years; see VIII. 29. See also II. 12, where, by some inaccuracy, he makes him to have been in India twenty years *before* he was at Babylon. Olear. *ad locum et præfat ad vit.* The common date of his birth is fixed by his Biographer's merely accidental mention of the revolt of Archelaus against the Romans, as taking place before Apollonius was twenty years old; see I. 12.

14 Philostr. I. 19.

15 Ibid. I. 26, *ad fin.*

16 Ibid. II. 1—40. Brucker, Vol. II. p. 110.

17 Ibid. III. 51.

18 Ibid. IV. 1. It is observable that this is the first distinct mention which his Biographer furnishes of his pretending to extraordinary power. The history of Lucian's Alexander leads us to suspect a secret understanding between him and the Priests, who might not be unwilling to avail themselves of his alliance in opposition to the exertions and miracles of St. Paul about that time in the same parts. That the Apostles were opposed by counter pretensions to miraculous power, we learn from Acts xiii. 8; see also Acts viii. and xix.

19 Ibid. IV. 11, *et seq.*

similar attempt at the Cave of Trophonius.[20] In both places his reputation for Magic was the cause of his exclusion.

Hitherto our memoir has given the unvaried life of a mere Pythagorean, which may be comprehended in three words, mysticism, travel, and disputation. From the date of his journey to Rome, which succeeded his Grecian tour, it is in some degree connected with the history of the times; and though much may be owing to the invention of Philostratus, there is neither reason nor necessity for supposing the narrative to be in substance untrue.

Visits Rome.

Nero had at this time prohibited the study of philosophy, alleging that it was made the pretence for Magical practices;[21]—and the report of his excesses so alarmed the followers of Apollonius as they approached Rome, that out of thirty-four who had accompanied him thus far, eight only could be prevailed on to proceed. On his arrival, the strangeness of his proceedings caused him to be brought successively before the consul Telesinus and Tigellinus the Minister of Nero;[22] both of whom however dismissed him after examination; the former from a secret leaning towards Philosophy, the latter from fear (as we are told) of his extraordinary powers. He was in consequence allowed to go about at his pleasure from Temple to Temple, haranguing the people, and prosecuting his reforms in the worship paid to the Gods. But here, as before, we discover marks of incorrectness in the Biographer. Had the edict against Philosophers been as severe as he represents, neither Apollonius, nor Demetrius the Cynic, who joined him after his arrival, would have been permitted to remain; certainly not Apollonius, after his acknowledgment of his own Magical powers in the presence of Tigellinus.[23]

Brought before Nero.

Denied by Philostratus all insight into the circumstances which influenced the movements of Apollonius, we must attend whither he thinks fit to conduct him. We find him next in Spain, taking part in the conspiracy forming against Nero by Vindex and others.[24] The political partisans of that day seem to have made use of professed jugglers and Magicians to gain over the body of the people to their interests. To this may be attributed Nero's banishing such characters from Rome;[25] and Apollonius had probably been already serviceable in this way at the Capital, as he was now in Spain, and immediately after to Vespasianus; and at a later period to Nerva.

Visits Spain,

[20] When denied at the latter place, he forced his way in. Philostr. VIII. 19.

[21] Ibid. IV. 35. Brucker (Vol. II. p. 118) with reason thinks this prohibition extended only to the profession of magic.

[22] Ibid. IV. 40, &c.

[23] Brucker, Vol. II. p. 120.

[24] Philostr. V. 10.

[25] Astrologers were concerned in Libo's conspiracy against Tiberius, and punished. Vespasianus, as we shall have occasion to notice presently, made use of them in furthering his political plans. Tacit. Hist. II. 78. We read of their predicting Nero's accession, the deaths of Vitellius and Domitianus, &c. They were sent into banishment by Tiberius, Claudius, Vitellius, and Domitianus. Philostratus describes Nero as issuing his edict *on leaving the Capital* for Greece, IV. 47. These circumstances seem to imply that astrology, magic, &c., were at that time of considerable service in political intrigues.

His next expeditions were to Africa, to Sicily, and so to Greece,[26] but as they do not supply any thing of importance to the elucidation of his character, it may be sufficient thus to have noticed them. At Athens he obtained the initiation in the Mysteries, for which he had on his former visit unsuccessfully applied. Athens.

The following spring, the seventy-third of his life according to the common calculation, he proceeded to Alexandria:[27] where he attracted the notice of Vespasianus, who had just assumed the purple, and seemed desirous of countenancing his proceedings by the sanction of Religion. Apollonius might be recommended to him for this purpose by the fame of his travels, his reputation for theurgic knowledge, and his late acts in Spain against Nero. It is satisfactory to be able to bring two individuals into contact, each of whom has in his turn been made to rival Christ and his Apostles in pretensions to miraculous power. Thus, claims which appeared to be advanced on distinct grounds are found to coalesce, and by the union of their separate inconsistencies contribute to expose each other. The celebrated cures by Vespasianus are connected with the ordinary juggles of the Pythagorean School; and Apollonius is found here, as in many other instances, to be the mere tool of political factions. But on the character of the latter we shall have more to say presently. And Alexandria. Introduced to Vespasianus.

His Biographer's account of his first meeting with the Emperor, which is perhaps substantially correct, is amusing from the regard which both parties paid to *effect* in their behaviour.[28] The latter, on entering Alexandria was met by the great body of the Magistrates, Præfects, and Philosophers of the city; but not discovering Apollonius in the number, he hastily asked, "whether the Tyanæan was in Alexandria," and when told he was philosophizing in the Serapeum, proceeding thither he suppliantly entreated him to make him Emperor; and, on the Philosopher's answering he had already done so in praying for a just and venerable Sovereign,[29] he avowed his determination of putting himself entirely into his hands, and of declining the supreme power unless he could obtain his countenance in assuming it.[30] A formal consultation was in consequence held, at which, besides Apollonius, Dio and Euphrates, Stoics in the Emperor's train, were allowed to deliver their sentiments; when

[26] Philostr. V. 11, &c.
[27] Ibid. V. 20, &c.
[28] Ibid. V. 27.
[29] Tacitus relates, that when Vespasianus was going to the *Serapeum*, *ut super rebus imperii consuleret*, Basilides, an Egyptian, who was at the time eighty miles distant, suddenly appeared to him; from his name the emperor drew an omen that the God sanctioned his assumption of the Imperial power. Hist. IV. 82. This sufficiently agrees in substance with the narrative of Philostratus to give the latter some probability. It was on this occasion that the famous cures are said to have been wrought.
[30] As Egypt supplied Rome with corn, Vespasianus by taking possession of that country almost secured to himself the Empire. Tacit. Hist. II. 82, III. 8. Philostratus however insinuates that he was *already* in possession of supreme power, and came to Egypt for the sanction of Apollonius. Τὴν μὲν ἀρχὴν κεκτημένος, διαλεξόμενος δὲ τῷ ἀνδρί. V. 27.

the latter Philosopher entered an honest protest against the sanction Apollonius was giving to the ambition of Vespasianus, and advocated the restoration of the Roman State to its ancient republican form.[31] This difference of opinion laid the foundation of a lasting quarrel between the rival advisers, to which Philostratus makes frequent allusion in the course of his history. Euphrates is mentioned by the ancients in terms of high commendation; by Pliny especially, who knew him well.[32] He seems to have seen through his opponent's character, as we gather even from Philostratus;[33] and when so plain a reason exists for the dislike which Apollonius, in his Letters, and Philostratus, manifest towards him, their censure must not be allowed to weigh against the testimony of unbiassed writers.

Visits Ethiopia.

After parting from Vespasianus, Apollonius undertook an expedition into Æthiopia, where he held discussions with the Gymnosophists, and visited the cataracts of the Nile.[34] On his return he received the news of the destruction of Jerusalem; and being pleased with the modesty of the conqueror, wrote to him in commendation of it. Titus is said to have invited him to Argos in Cilicia, for the sake of his advice on various subjects, and obtained from him a promise that at some future time he would visit him at Rome.[35]

On the succession of Domitianus, he became once more engaged in the political commotions of the day, exerting himself to excite the countries of Asia Minor against the Emperor.[36] These proceedings at length occasioned an order from the Government to bring him to Rome; which, however, according to his Biographer's account, he anticipated by voluntarily surrendering himself, under the idea that by his prompt appearance he might remove the Emperor's jealousy, and save Nerva and others whose political interests he had been promoting. On arriving at Rome he was brought before Domitianus; and when, very inconsistently with his wish to shield his friends from suspicion, he launched out into praise of Nerva, he was forced away into prison to the company of the worst criminals, his hair and beard were cut short, and his limbs loaded with chains. After some days he was brought to trial; the charges against him being the singularity of his dress and appearance, his being called a God, his foretelling a pestilence at Ephesus, and his sacrificing a child with Nerva for the purpose of augury.[37] Philostratus supplies us with an ample defence, which he *was to have* delivered,[38] had he

Imprisoned by Domitianus. His trial.

[31] Philostr. V. 31.

[32] Brucker, Vol. II. p. 566, &c.

[33] Philostr. V. 37, he makes Euphrates say to Vespasianus, Φιλεσοφίαν, ὦ βασιλεῦ, τὴν μὲν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαινεῖ καὶ ἀσπάζω· τὴν δὲ θεοκλυτεῖν φέσκουσαν παραιτοῦ καταψευδόμενοι γὰρ τοῦ θείου πολλὰ καὶ ἀνοήτα, ἡμᾶς ἐπαίρουσι. See Brucker; and Apollon. Epist. 8.

[34] Ibid. VI. 1, &c.

[35] Ibid. VI. 29, &c.

[36] Philostr. VII. 1, &c. see Brucker, Vol. II. p. 128.

[37] Ibid. VIII. 5, 6, &c. On account of his foretelling the pestilence he was honoured as a God by the Ephesians, VII. 21. Hence this prediction appeared in the indictment.

[38] Εἶτα καὶ λόγον ἀπολογίας ὁ θειότατος μάλα γε συντέττει περιεοντισμένως, αγνοῶν ὅτι δῆτα ἐς μάτην αὐτῷ σπουδασθήσεται ἡ γραφή· Euseb. in Hier. 41.

not in the course of the proceedings suddenly vanished from the Court, and transported himself to Puteoli, whither he had before sent on Damis.

His pretended miraculous disappearance.

This is the only miraculous occurrence which forces itself into the history as a component part of the narrative; the rest being of easy omission without any detriment to its entireness.[39] And strictly speaking, even here it is not the miracle of transportation which interferes with its continuity, but his mere liberation from confinement: which, though we should admit the arbitrary assertions of Philostratus, seems very clearly to have taken place in the regular course of business. He allows that just before the Philosopher's pretended disappearance, Domitianus had publicly acquitted him, and that after the miracle he proceeded to hear the cause next in order, as if nothing had happened;[40] and tells us, moreover, that Apollonius on his return from Greece gave out that he had pleaded his own cause and so escaped, no allusion being made to a miraculous preservation.[41]

After spending two years in the latter country in his usual Philosophical disputations, he passed into Ionia. According to his Biographer's chronology, he was now approaching the completion of his hundredth year. We may easily understand, therefore, that when invited to Rome by Nerva, who had just succeeded to the Empire, he declined the proposed honour with an intimation that their meeting must be deferred to another state of being.[42] His death took place shortly after; and Ephesus, Rhodes, and Crete are variously mentioned as the spot at which it occurred.[43] A Temple was dedicated to him at Tyana,[44] which was in consequence accounted one of the sacred cities, and permitted the privilege of electing its own Magistrates.[45]

His Death.

His Works.

He is said to have written[46] a treatise upon Judicial Astrology, a work on Sacrifices, another on Oracles, a Life of Pythagoras, and an account of the answers he received from Trophonius, besides the memoranda noticed in the opening of our memoir. A collection of Letters ascribed to him is still extant.[47]

It may be regretted that so copious a history, as that which we

[39] Perhaps his causing the writing of the indictment to vanish from the paper, when he was brought before Tigellinus, may be an exception, as being the alleged cause of his acquittal. In general, however, no consequence follows from his marvellous actions: *e.g.* when imprisoned by Domitianus, in order to show Damis his power, he is described as drawing his leg out of the fetters, and then—as putting it back again. Εναρμόσαντα αὖ τὸ σκέλος, τὰ τοῦ δεδεμένου, πράττειν, VII. 38. A great exertion of power with apparently a small object.

[40] Philostr. VIII. 8, 9. Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀπῆλθε τοῦ δικαστηρίου, δαιμονιόντε καὶ οὐ ῥᾴδιον εἰπεῖν τρόπον, οὐκ ἔπαθεν ὁ ὑραννος, ὅπερ οἱ πολλοὶ ᾤοντο—ηκροᾶτο μὲν γὰρ ἑτέρας επ' εκείνῃ δίκης.

[41] Philostr. VIII. 15.

[42] Ibid. VIII. 27.

[43] Ibid. VIII. 30.

[44] Ibid. I. 5, VIII. 29.

[45] A coin of Hadrian's reign is extant with the inscription, Τύανα ἱερὰ, ἄσυλος, αυτονόμος. Olear. ad Philostr. VIII. 31.

[46] See Bayle, Art. *Apollonius*; and Brucker.

[47] Bishop Lloyd considers them spurious, but Olearius and Brucker show that there is good reason from internal evidence to suppose them genuine. See Olear. Addend. ad præfat. Epistol.; and Brucker, Vol. II. p. 147.

have abridged, should not contain more authentic and valuable matter. Both the secular transactions of the times and the history of Christianity might have been illustrated by the life of one, who, while an instrument of the partisans of Vindex, Vespasianus, and Nerva, was a contemporary and in some respects a rival of the Apostles; and who, probably, was with St. Paul at Ephesus and Rome.[48] As far as his personal character is concerned, there is nothing to be lamented in these omissions. Both his Biographer's panegyric and his own Letters convict him of pedantry, self-conceit, and affectation incompatible with the feelings of an enlarged, cultivated, or amiable mind. His virtues, as we have already seen, were temperance and a disregard of wealth; and without them it would have been hardly possible for him to have gained the popularity which he enjoyed. The great object of his ambition was to emulate the fame of his master; and his efforts seem to have been fully rewarded by the general admiration he attracted, the honours paid him by the Oracles, and the attentions shown him by men in power.

His character examined.

We might have been inclined, indeed, to suspect that his reputation existed principally in his Biographer's panegyric, were it not mentioned by other writers. The celebrity which he has enjoyed since the writings of the Eclectics, by itself affords but a faint presumption of his notoriety before they appeared. Yet after all allowances, there remains enough to show that, however fabulous the details of his history may be, there was something extraordinary in his life and character. Some foundation there must have been for statements which his eulogists were able to maintain in the face of those who would have spoken out had they been altogether novel. Pretensions never before advanced must have excited the surprise and contempt of the advocates of Christianity.[49] Yet Eusebius styles him a wise man, and seems to admit the correctness of Philostratus, except in the miraculous parts of the narrative.[50] Lactantius does not deny that a statue was erected to him at Ephesus;[51] and Sidonius Apollinaris, who even wrote his life, speaks of him as the admiration of the countries he traversed, and the favourite of monarchs.[52] One of his works was deposited in the palace at Antium by the Emperor Hadrian, who also formed a collection of his letters;[53] statues were erected to him in the temples, divine honours paid him by Caracalla, Alexander Severus, and Aurelianus, and magical virtue attributed to his name.[54]

Admissions of the Fathers.

[48] Apollonius continued at Ephesus, Smyrna, &c. from A.D. 50 to about 59, and was at Rome from A.D. 63 to 66. St. Paul passed through Ionia into Greece A.D. 53, and was at Ephesus A.D. 54, and again from A.D. 56 to 58; he was at Rome in A.D. 65 and 66, when he was martyred.

[49] Lucian and Apuleius speak of him as if his name were familiar to them. Olear. præf. ad Vit.

[50] In Hierocl. 5.

[51] Inst. V. 3.

[52] See Bayle, Art. *Apollonius;* and Cudworth, Intell. Syst. IV. 14.

[53] Philostr. VIII. 19, 20.

[54] See Eusebius, Vopiscus, Lampridius, &c. as quoted by Bayle.

It has in consequence been made a subject of dispute, how far his reputation was built upon that supposed claim to extraordinary power which, as was noticed in the opening of our memoir, has led to his comparison with sacred names. If it could be shown that he did advance such pretensions, and upon the strength of them was admitted as an object of divine honour, a case would be made out, not indeed so strong as that on which Christianity is founded, yet remarkable enough to demand our serious examination. Assuming, then, or overlooking this necessary condition, sceptical writers have been forward to urge the history and character of Apollonius as creating a difficulty in the argument for Christianity derived from Miracles; while their opponents have sometimes attempted to account for a phenomenon of which they had not yet ascertained the existence, and most gratuitously have ascribed his supposed power to the influence of the Evil principle.[55] On examination, we shall find not a shadow of a reason for supposing that Apollonius worked Miracles, in any proper sense of the word; or that he professed to work them; or that he rested his authority on extraordinary works of any kind; and it is strange indeed that Christians, with victory in their hands, should have so mismanaged their cause as to establish an objection where none existed, and in their haste to extricate themselves from an imaginary difficulty, to overturn one of the main arguments for revealed Religion.

Miraculous pretensions

not made by himself.

To state these pretended prodigies is in most cases a refutation of their claim upon our notice,[56] and even those which are not in themselves exceptionable, become so from the circumstances or manner in which they took place. Apollonius is said to have been an incarnation of the God Proteus; his birth was announced by the falling of a thunderbolt and a chorus of swans; his death signalized by a wonderful voice calling him up to Heaven; and after death he appeared to a youth to convince him of the immortality of the soul.[57] He is reported to have known the language of birds; to have evoked the Spirit of Achilles; to have dislodged a demon from a boy; to have detected an Empusa who was seducing a youth into marriage; when brought before Tigellinus, to have caused the writing of the indictment to vanish from the paper; when imprisoned by Domitianus, to have miraculously released himself from his fetters; to have discovered the soul of Amasis in the body of a lion; to have cured a youth attacked by hydrophobia, whom he pronounced to be Telephus the Mysian.[58] In declaring men's thoughts and distant events he indulged most liber-

Enumeration of these Miracles.

[55] See Brucker on this point, Vol. II. p. 141, who refers to various authors. Eusebius takes a more sober view of the question, allowing the substance of the history, but disputing the extraordinary parts. See in Hierocl. 5 and 12.

[56] Most of them are imitations of the miracles attributed to Pythagoras.

[57] See Philostr. I. 4, 5, VIII. 30, 31. He insinuates (Cf. VIII. 29 with 31,) that Apollonius was taken up alive. See Euseb. 8.

[58] Ibid. IV. 3, 16, 20, 25, 44, V. 42, VI. 43, VII. 38.

ally; adopting a brevity, which seemed becoming the dignity of his character, while it secured his prediction from the possibility of an entire failure. For instance: he gave previous intimation of Nero's narrow escape from lightning; foretold the short reigns of his successors; informed Vespasianus at Alexandria of the burning of the Capitol; predicted the violent death of Titus by a relative; discovered a knowledge of the private history of his Egyptian guide; foresaw the wreck of a ship he had embarked in, and the execution of a Cilician Proprætor.[59] We must not omit his first predicting and then removing a pestilence at Ephesus; the best authenticated of his professed Miracles, being attested by the erecting of a statue to him in consequence. He is said to have put an end to the malady by commanding an aged man to be stoned, whom he pointed out as its author, and who when the stones were removed was found changed into the shape of a dog.[60]

Their Insipidity.

On the insipidity and inconclusiveness of most of these legends, considered as evidences of extraordinary power, it is unnecessary to enlarge; yet these are the prodigies which some writers have put in competition with the Christian Miracles, and which others have thought necessary to ascribe to Satanic influence. Two indeed there are which must be mentioned by themselves, as being more worthy our attention than the rest: his raising a young maid at Rome, who was being carried to burial, and his proclaiming at Ephesus the assassination of Domitianus at the very time in which it took place.[61] But, not to speak at present of the want of all satisfactory evidence for either fact, the account of the former, we may observe, bears in its language and detail evident marks of being written in imitation of Scripture Miracles,[62] and the latter has all the appearance of a political artifice employed to excite the people against the tyrant, and exaggerated by the Biographer.[63]

[59] Philostr. I. 12, IV. 24, 43, V. 11—13, 18, 30, VI. 3, 32. His prediction of the ruin of the Proprætor is conveyed in the mere exclamation,—ὦ ἡ δεινα ἡμέρα, meaning the day of his execution; of the short reigns of Nero's successors, in his saying, that many *Thebans* would succeed him; ὁ χρόνον κομιδῇ βραχὺν, adds Philostratus, ἡχθησαν ες τὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων πράγματα. A like ambiguity attends, more or less, all his predictions.

[60] Ibid IV. 10.

[61] Ibid. IV. 45, and VIII. 26.

[62] This is manifest from the passage: Κόρη εν ὥρα γάμυ τιθέναι εδόκει, καὶ ὁ νυμφίος ηπολυθει τῇ κλίνῃ, βοῶν ὀπόσα ετ' αιτλεῖ γάμω. Ξυνωλοφύρετο δὲ καὶ ἡ Ῥώμη, καὶ γὰρ ετύγχανεν οικίας ἡ κόρη τελύσης ες ὑπάτυς. Παρατυχὼν ὖν ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος τῷ παθει, κατάθεσθε, ἔφη, τὴν κλίνην. Εγὼ γὰρ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ κόρῃ δακρύων, παύσω. Καὶ ἅμα ἤρετο ὁ τι ὄνομα αυτῇ ειη; οἱ μὲν δὴ πολλοὶ ὠοντο λόγον αγορεύειν αυτὸν, οἱοι τῶν λόγων οἱ επικήδειοι τι καὶ τὰς ολοφύρσεις εγείροντες. Ο δὲ, ουδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ προσαψάμενος αυτῆς, καί τι καὶ αφανῶς ειπιτὼν, αφύπνισε τὴν κόρην τῷ δοκοῦντος θανάτυ. Καὶ φωνήν τε ἡ παῖς αφῆκεν, επανῆλθέ τε ες τὴν οικίαν τὸ πατρὸς ὥστις ἡ Αλκῆστις ὑπὸ τῷ Ἡρακλέυς αναζιωθεῖσα. Cf. Mark v. 39, &c. Luke vii. 11. See also John xi. 41—43; Acts iii. 4—6. In the sequel, the parents offer him money, which he gives as a portion to the damsel. See 2 Kings v. 15, 16, and other similar passages of Scripture.

[63] As Apollonius was before this busily engaged in promoting Nerva's interests among the Ionians, it seems probable that the words in question were uttered with a similar view. Dion (Lib. 67,) mentions a person in Germany who predicted the death of Domitianus; and says that the astrologers, (among whom Tzetzes numbers Apollonius,) had foretold Nerva's advancement. There is little doubt all

But the trifling character of most of these prodigies is easily accounted for, when we consider the means by which the author professed to work them, and the cause to which he referred them. Of Miracles, indeed, which are asserted to proceed from the Author of nature, sobriety, dignity and conclusiveness may fairly be required; but when an individual ascribes his extraordinary power to his knowledge of some merely human secret, impropriety does but evidence his own want of taste, and ambiguity his want of skill. We have no longer a right to expect a great end, worthy means, or a frugal and judicious application of the Miraculous gift. Now, Apollonius claimed nothing beyond a fuller insight into nature than others had; a knowledge of the fated and immutable laws to which it is conformed, of the hidden springs on which it moves.[64] He brought a secret from the East and used it; and though he professed to be favoured, and in a manner taught by good Spirits,[65] yet he certainly referred no part of his power to a Supreme intelligence. Theurgic virtues, or those which consisted in communion with the Powers and Principles of nature, were high in the scale of Pythagorean excellence, and to them it was that he ascribed his extraordinary gift. By temperate living, it was said, the mind was endued with ampler and more exalted faculties than it otherwise possessed; partook more fully of the nature of the One universal Soul, was gifted with Prophetic inspiration, and a kind of intuitive perception of secret things.[66] This power, derived from the favour of the celestial Deities, who were led to distinguish the virtuous and high-minded, was quite distinct from Magic, an infamous, uncertain, and deceitful art, consisting in a compulsory power over infernal Spirits, operating by means of Astrology, Auguries and Sacrifices, and directed

Real nature of his pretensions.

these predictions were intended to compass their own accomplishment. Dion confirms Philostratus's account of the occurrence in question; but merely says, that Apollonius αναβὰς επί τινα λίθον ὑψηλόν εν Εφέσω ἢ καὶ ἑτέρωθι, καὶ συγκαλέσας τὸ πλῆθος, cried out καλῶς Στὲφανε, &c. Lib. 67. He then adds, τοῦτο μὲν οὕτως εγένετο, κἂν μυριάκις τὶς απιστήσῃ—an assurance truly satisfactory in testimony given 130 years after the event. Allowing, however, for some exaggeration, his account is perfectly consistent with the supposition that the exclamation of Apollonius was intended to subserve a political purpose. Let us now see how Philostratus has embellished the story. Διαλεγὸμενος περὶ τὰ τῶν ξυστῶν άλση κατὰ μεσημβρίαν, ὅτε δὴ καὶ τὰ εν τοῖς βασιλείοις εγίγνετο, πρῶτον μὲν ὑφῆκε τῆς φωνῆς, οἷον δείσας· εἶτ' ελλιπέστερον ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν, ἡρμήνευσεν, ἴσα τοῖς μεταξύ λόγων διορῶσί τι ἕτερον. Εἶτα εσιώπησεν, ὥσπερ οἱ τῶν λόγων εκπεσόντες· βλέψας τε δεινὸν ες τὴν γὴν, καὶ προβὰς τρία ἢ τέτταρα τῶν βημάτων, παῖε τὸν τύραννον, παῖε, εβόα· οὐχ ὥσπερ εκ κατόπτρου τινὸς εἴδωλον αληθείας ἕλκων, ἀλλ' αυτὰ ὁρῶν καὶ ξυλλαμβάνειν δοκῶν τὰ δρώμενα· Εκπεπληγμένης δὲ τῆς Εφέσου, παρῆν γὰρ διαλεγομένῳ πᾶσα, (here he differs from Dion in an essential point,) ἐπισχὼν, ὅσον οἱ διορῶντες εστ' ἂν γένηται τι τῶν αμφιβόλων τέλος, θαρρεῖτε, εἶπεν, ὦ άνδρες, ὁ γὰρ τύραννος απισφακται τήμερον, &c. VIII. 26.

64 Philostr. V. 12; in I. 2, he associates Democritus, a *natural philosopher*, with Pythagoras and Empedocles. See VIII. 7, Sec. 8, and Brucker, Vol. I. p. 1108, &c. and p. 1184.

65 In his apology before Domitianus, he expressly attributes his removal of the Ephesian pestilence to Hercules, and makes this ascription the test of a divine Philosopher as distinguished from a Magician, VIII. 7, Sec 9, *ubi vid.* Olear.

66 Ἀ ρ' οὐν τὸ οὕτω διατᾶσθαι λεπτότητα μόνον εργάζεται τῶν αισθήσεων, ἢ ισχὺν επὶ τὰ μέγιστά τε καὶ θαυμασιώτατα. . . . τοῦτό μοι, ὦ βασιλεῦ, τάς αισθήσεις εν αιτίᾳ τινὶ απορρήτῳ φυλάττει, κουκ εᾶ θολερὸν περὶ αυτὰς οὐδὲν εἶναι, διορᾷν τε, ὥσπερ εν κατόπτρου αυγῇ, πάντα γιγνόμενά τε καὶ εσόμενα, VIII. 7, Sec. 9. See also II. 37, VI. 11, VIII. 5.

to the personal emolument of those who cultivated it.[67] To our present question, however, this distinction is unimportant. To whichever principle the Miracles of Apollonius be referred, Theurgy or Magic, in either case they are independent of the First Cause, and not granted with a view to the particular purpose to which they are to be applied.[68]

We have also incidentally shown that they did not profess to be Miracles in the proper meaning of the word, that is, *evident exceptions* to the laws of nature. At the utmost they do but exemplify the aphorism "knowledge is power."[69] Such as are within the range of human knowledge are no *Miracles*. Those of them, on the contrary, which are beyond it, will be found on inspection to be unintelligible, and to convey no *evidence*. The prediction of an earthquake (for instance) is not necessarily superhuman. An interpretation of the discourse of birds can never be verified. In understanding languages, knowing future events, discovering the purposes of others, recognising human souls when enclosed in new bodies, Apollonius merely professes extreme penetration and extraordinary acquaintance with nature. The spell by which he evokes Spirits and exorcises Demons, implies the mere possession of a secret;[70] and so perfectly is his Biographer aware of this, as almost to doubt the resuscitation of the Roman damsel, the only decisive Miracle of them all, *on the ground of its being supernatural*, insinuating, that perhaps she was dead only in appearance.[71] Hence, moreover, may be understood the meaning of the charge of Magic, as brought against the early Christians by their Heathen adversaries; the Miracles of the Gospels being strictly interruptions of physical order, and incompatible with Theurgic knowledge.[72]

When Christ and his Apostles declare themselves to be sent from God, this claim to a divine mission illustrates and gives dignity to their profession of extraordinary power. Whereas the divinity,[73] no less than the gift of miracles to which Apollonius laid claim, must be understood in its Pythagorean sense, as referring not to any inti-

[67] Philostr. I. 2. and Olear. *ad loc.* note 3, IV. 44, V. 12, VII. 39, VIII. 7; Apollon. Epist. 8 and 52; Philostr. Proœm. vit. Sophist.; Euseb. in Hier. 2; Mosheim, de Simone Mago, Sec. 13. Yet it must be confessed that the views both of the Pythagoreans and Eclectics were very inconsistent on this subject. Eusebius notices several instances of γοητεία in Apollonius's miracles; in Hierocl. 10, 28, 29 and 31. See Brucker, Vol. II. p. 447. At Eleusis and the Cave of Triphonius, Apollonius was, as we have seen, accounted a Magician, and so also by Euphrates, Mæragenes, Apuleius, &c. See Olear. Præf. ad vit. p. xxxiii; and Brucker, Vol. II. p. 136, note *k*.

[68] See Mosheim, Dissertat. de turbatâ Ecclesiâ, &c. Sec. 27.

[69] See Quæst. ad Orthodox xxiv. as quoted by Olearius, in his Preface, p. xxxiv.

[70] Eusebius calls it θεῖά τις καὶ ἀρρήτος σοφία in Hierocl. 2. In III. 41, Philostratus speaks of the κλήσεις αἷς θεοὶ χαίρουσι, the *spells* for evoking them, which Apollonius brought from India; Cf. IV. 16, and in IV. 20 of the τεκμήριον used for casting out an Evil Spirit.

[71] Εἴ τι σπινθῆρα τῆς ψυχῆς εὕρειν ἐν αὐτῇ, ὃς ἐλελήθει τοὺς θεραπεύοντας, (λέγεται γὰρ ὡς ψευκάζοι μὲν ὁ Ζεὺς, ἡ δὲ ἀτιμίζοι ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου) εἶτ' ἀπεσβηκυῖαν τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνέθαλψέ τε καὶ ἀνέλαβεν, ἀρρήτος ἡ κατάληψις, &c.

[72] Douglas, (Criterion, p. 387, note) observes that some heretics affirmed that our Lord rose from the dead φανταστικῶς, only in appearance, *from an idea of the impossibility of a resurrection.*

[73] Apollon. Epist. 17.

mate connexion with a Supreme agent, but to his partaking, through his Theurgic skill, more largely than others in the perfections of the animating principle of nature.

Yet, whatever is understood by his Miraculous gift and his divine nature, certainly his works were not adduced as *vouchers* for his divinity, nor were they, in fact, the principal cause of his reputation. *We meet with no claim to extraordinary power in his Letters;* nor when returning thanks to a city for public honours bestowed on him, nor when complaining to his brother of the neglect of his townsmen, nor when writing to his opponent Euphrates.[74] To the Milesians, indeed, he speaks of earthquakes which he had predicted; but without appealing to the prediction in proof of his authority.[75] As, then, he is so far from insisting on his pretended extraordinary powers, and himself connects the acquisition of them with his Eastern expedition,[76] we may conclude that credit for possessing a Magical secret was a *part* of the reputation which that expedition conferred. A foreign appearance, singularity of manners, a life of travel, and pretences to superior knowledge, excite the imagination of beholders;[77] and, as in the case of a wandering people among ourselves, appear to invite the individuals thus distinguished to fraudulent practices. Apollonius is represented as making converts *as soon as seen.*[78] It was not, then, his display of wonders, but his Pythagorean dress and mysterious deportment which arrested attention, and made him thought superior to other men, because he was different from them. Like Lucian's Alexander,[79] (who was all but his disciple,) he was skilled in Medicine, professed to be favoured by Æsculapius, pretended to foreknowledge, and was supported by the Oracles; and being more strict in conduct than the Paphlagonian,[80] he established a more lasting celebrity. His usefulness to political aspirants contributed to his success; perhaps also the real and contemporary Miracles of the Christian teachers would dispose many minds easily to acquiesce in any claims of a similar character.

[74] See Epist. 1, 2, &c. 11, 44, the last-mentioned addressed to his brother begins τί θαυμαστόν, εἰ με τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων ἰσοθεον ἡγημένων, τινῶν δὲ καὶ θεὸν, μόνη μεχρὶ νῦν ἡ πατρὶς ἀγνοεῖ, δι' ἣν ἐξαιρέτως ἐστάδασα λαμπρὸς εἶναι; τουτὶ γὰρ ἰδ' ὑμῖν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, ὡς ὁρῶ, γέγονε φανερόν, ὡς εἴην πολλῶν αμείνων λόγους τε καὶ ἤθος; that is, he complains that *whereas* he so excels in life and moral teaching, *yet* he is not considered by them as divine.

[75] Epist. 68. Claudius, in a message to the Tyanæans, Epist. 53, praises him merely as a benefactor to youth.

[76] Philostr. VI. 11. See Euseb. in Hierocl. 26, 27. καὶ δῆτα ὡς ἐξ Αράζων καὶ Μάγων καὶ Ινδῶν παραδοξόν τινα καὶ θειον αυτον ἡμῖν αγαγὼν, παραδόξων ευτεῦθεν αφηγημάτων κατάρχεται.

[77] Hence the first of the charges brought against him by Domitianus was the *strangeness of his dress.* Philostr. VIII. 5. By way of contrast, Cf. 1 Cor. ii. 3, 4; 2 Cor. x. 10.

[78] Philostr. IV. 1, Επειδὴ δὲ εἶδον τὸν ἄνδρα εν Ιωνίᾳ, παρελθόντα ες τὴν Ε'φεσον, ουδὲ οἱ βάναυσοι ἔτι προς ταῖς ἑαυτῶν τέχναις ἦσαν· αλλ' ηκολοῦθουν, ὁ μὲν σοφίας, ὁ δὲ εἴδους, ὁ δὲ δὲ διαίτης, ὁ δὲ σχήματος, οἱ δὲ πάντων ὁμοῦ θαυμασταὶ ὄντες. See also I. 19, 21, IV. 17, 20, 39, VII. 31, &c., and I. 10, 12, &c.

[79] Brucker, Vol. II. p. 144.

[80] Brucker supposes that, as in the case of Alexander, gain was his object; but we seem to have no proof of this, nor is it necessary thus to account for his conduct. We discover, indeed, in his character, no marks of that high enthusiasm which would support him in his whimsical career without any definite worldly object; yet the veneration he inspired, and the notice taken of him by great men, might be quite a sufficient recompence to a conceited and narrow mind.

His story an imitation of Scripture.

In the foregoing remarks we have admitted the general fidelity of the history, because ancient authors allow it, and there was no necessity to dispute it. Tried however on its own merits, it is quite unworthy of serious attention. Not only in the Miraculous accounts, (as we have already seen,) but in the relation of a multitude of ordinary facts, an effort to rival our Saviour's history is distinctly visible. The favour in which Apollonius from a child was held by Gods and men; his conversations when a youth in the Temple of Æsculapius; his determination in spite of danger to go up to Rome;[81] the cowardice of his disciples in deserting him; the charge brought against him of disaffection to Cæsar; the Minister's acknowledging, on his private examination, that he was more than man; the ignominious treatment of him by Domitianus on his second appearance at Rome; his imprisonment with criminals; his vanishing from Court and sudden reappearance to his mourning disciples at Puteoli;[82] these, with other particulars of a similar cast, evidence a history modelled after the narrative of the Evangelists. Expressions, moreover, and descriptions occur, clearly imitated from the sacred volume. To this we must add[83] the Rhetorical colouring of the whole composition, so contrary to the sobriety of truth;[84] the fabulous accounts of things and places interspersed through the history;[85] lastly we must bear in mind the principle, recognised by

[81] Cf. also Acts xx. 22, 23; xxi. 4, 11—14.

[82] Philostr. I. 8, 11, IV. 36, 38, 44, VII. 34, VIII. 5, 11.

[83] See the description of his raising the Roman maid as above given. Take again the following account of his appearance to Damis and Demetrius at Puteoli, after vanishing from Court, VIII. 12. Ανολοφυρομένου δὲ τοῦ Δάμιδος, καὶ τι καὶ τοιοῦτον ειπόντος, ἆρ' οψόμεθά ποτε, ὦ θεοὶ, τὸν καλόν τε καί αγαθὸν εταῖρον; ακούσας ὁ Απολλώνιος . .όψεσθε, εἶπε, μᾶλλον δὲ εωράκατε. Ζῶντα, ἔφη ὁ Δημήτριος, ει δὲ τεθνεῶτα ούπω πεπαύμεθα ἐπὶ σοὶ κλαόντες· προτείνας οὖν ὁ Απολλώνιος τὴν χεῖρα, λαζοῦ μου ἔφη, κὰν μὲν διαφύγω σε, ειδωλόν ειμί σοι εκ Περσεφάττης ἧκον . . . . ει δὲ υπομείναιμι ἁπτόμενον, πειθε καὶ Δάμιν ξῆν τέ με καὶ μὴ αποβεβληκέναι τὸ οῶμα. Ουκέθ' οἷοι απιστεῖν ἦσαν, ἀλλ' αναστάντες, &c. . . . . And presently Apollonius says, Τὰ δ' ὑπὲρ τῆς δίκης πεύσεσθε μὲν, ου μὴν ενταῦθα· δείλη τε γὰρ ικανῶς ἤδη, καὶ βαδίζειν ὥρα ες ἄστυ· ηδίους δ' οἱ καθ' ὁδὸν λόγοι παραπέμψαι βαδίζοντας· ἴωμεν οὖν διαλαλοῦντες, ὑπὲρ ὧν ερωτᾶτε. . . ἃ δ' ούπω ἴστε δίειμι, διείρων ἀπὸ τῆς προρρήσεως, &c. here is much incautious agreement with Luke xxiv. 14—17, 27, 29, 32, 36—40. Also more or less in the following: VII. 30, init. and 34, fin. with Luke xii. 11, 12: III. 38, with Matt. xvii. 14, &c. where observe the contrast of the two narratives: VIII. 30, fin. with Acts xii. 7—10: IV. 44, with John xviii. 33, &c.: VII. 34, init. with Mark xiv. 65: IV. 34, init. with Acts xvi. 8—10: I. 19, fin. with Mark vii. 27, 28. Brucker and Douglas notice the following in the detection of the Empusa: Δακρύοντι εῴκει· τὸ φάσμα, καὶ εδεῖτο μὴ βασανίζειν αὐτὸ, μηδὲ αναγκάζειν ὁμολογεῖν ὅτι εἴη, IV. 25, Cf. Mark v. 7—9. Olearius compares an expression in VII. 30, with 1 Cor. ix. 9.

[84] *E.G.* his ambitious descriptions of countries, &c. In IV. 30, 32, V. 22, VI. 24, he ascribes to Apollonius regular Socratic disputations, and in VI. 11, a long and flowery speech in the presence of the Gymnosophists,—modes of Philosophical instruction totally at variance with the genius of the Pythagorean school, the Philosopher's Letters still extant, and the writer's own description of his manner of teaching, I. 17. Some of his exaggerations and mis-statements have been noticed in the course of the narrative. As a specimen of the Rhetorical style in which the work is written, we notice a form of expression in his account of the recovery of the Roman damsel, Ο δὲ οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ προσαψάμενος αὐτῆς αφύπνισε,—contrast this with the simplicity of the Scripture narrative. See also the last sentence of V. 17, and indeed *passim*.

[85] *E.G.* his accounts of Indian and Æthiopian monsters; of serpents whose eyes were jewels of magical virtue; of pygmies; of golden water; of the speaking tree; of a woman half white and half black, &c.: he incorporates in his narrative the fables of Ctesias, Agatharchidas, and other writers. His blunders in geo-

the Pythagorean and Eclectic schools, of permitting exaggeration and deceit in the cause of Philosophy.[86]

Inadeqate testimony of Philostratus.

After all, it must be remembered, that were the pretended Miracles as unexceptionable as we have shown them to be absurd and useless,—were they plain interruptions of established laws, were they grave and dignified in their nature, and important in their object, and were there nothing to excite suspicion in the design, manner, or character of the narrator,—still the testimony on which they rest is the bare word of an author writing one hundred years after the death of the person panegyrized, and far distant from the places in which most of the Miracles were wrought; and who can give no better account of his information than that he gained it from an unpublished work,[87] professedly indeed composed by a witness of the extraordinary transactions, but passing into his hands through two intermediate possessors. These are circumstances which almost, without positive objections, are sufficient by their own negative force to justify a summary rejection of the whole account. Unless indeed the history had been perverted to a mischievous purpose, we should esteem it impertinent to direct argument against a mere romance, and to subject a work of imagination to a grave discussion.

graphy and natural philosophy may be added, as far as they arise from the desire of describing wonders, &c. See also his pompous description of the wonders of Babylon, which were not then in existence. Prideaux, Connection, Part I. Book VIII. For his inconsistencies, see Eusebius and Brucker. It must be remembered, that in the age of Philostratus the composition of romantic histories was in fashion.

[86] See Brucker, Vol. I. p. 992, Vol. II. p. 378. Apollonius was only one out of several who were set up by the Eclectics as rivals to Christ. Brucker, Vol. II. p. 372. Mosheim, de turbatâ Ecclesiâ, &c. Sec. 25, 26.

[87] Philostr. I. 2, 3. He professes that his account contains much *news*. As to the sources, besides the Journal of Damis, from which he pretends to derive his information, he neither tells us how he met with them, nor what they contained; nor does he refer to them in the course of his history. On the other hand, much (as we have above noticed) of the detail of Apollonius's journey is derived from the writings of Ctesias, &c. &c.

THE

MIRACLES OF SCRIPTURE

COMPARED WITH

THOSE RELATED ELSEWHERE,

AS REGARDS THEIR RESPECTIVE OBJECT, NATURE, AND EVIDENCE.

WE are naturally led to pursue the subject which the life of Apollonius has thus introduced, by drawing an extended comparison between the Miracles of Scripture and those elsewhere related, as regards their respective object, nature, and evidence. We shall divide our observations under the following heads:—

I. On the Nature and general Uses of Miracles.
II. On the antecedent Credibility of a Miracle, considered as a Divine Interposition.
III. On the Criterion of a Miracle, considered as a Divine Interposition.
IV. On the direct Evidence for the Christian Miracles.

I.

ON THE NATURE AND GENERAL USES OF MIRACLES.

Definition of a Miracle.

A Miracle may be considered as an event inconsistent with the constitution of nature, *i.e.* the established course of things in which it is found. Or, again, an event in a given system which cannot be referred to any law, or accounted for by the operation of any principle in that system. It does not necessarily imply a *violation* of nature, as some have supposed,—merely the *interposition* of an external cause, which, as we shall hereafter show, can be no other than the agency of the Deity. And the effect produced is that of unusual or increased action in the parts of the system.

A Miracle a relative term.

It is then a relative term, not only as it presupposes an assemblage of laws from which it is a deviation, but also as it has reference to *some one particular system;* for the same event which is anomalous in one, may be quite regular when observed in connexion with another. The Miracles of Scripture, for instance, are irregularities in the economy of nature, but with a moral end; and forming one

instance out of many, of the *providence* of God, *i.e.* an instance of occurrences in the natural world with a final cause. Thus, while they are exceptions to the laws of one system, they may coincide with those of another. They profess to be the *evidence of a Revelation*, the criterion of a divine message. To consider them as mere exceptions to physical order, is to take a very incomplete view of them. It is to degrade them from the station which they hold in the plans and provisions of the divine mind, and to strip them of their real use and dignity; for as naked and isolated facts they do but deform an harmonious system.

A Miracle distinguished from a merely extraordinary event.

From this account of a Miracle, it is evident that it may often be difficult exactly to draw the line between uncommon and strictly Miraculous events. The production of ice, *e.g.* might have seemed *at first sight* Miraculous to the Siamese; for it was a phenomenon referable to none of those laws of nature which are in ordinary action in tropical climates. Such, again, might magnetic attraction appear, in ages familiar only with the attraction of gravity.[1] On the other hand, the extraordinary works of Moses or Paul appear such, even when referred to those simple and elementary principles of nature which the widest experience has confirmed. As far as this affects the *discrimination* of supernatural facts, it will be considered in its proper place; meanwhile let it suffice to state, that those events only are connected with our present subject *which have no assignable second cause or antecedent*, and which, on that account, are from the nature of the case referred to the immediate agency of the Deity.

Revelation and all its evidences more or less Miraculous.

A Revelation, *i.e. a direct message from God to man*, itself bears in some degree a Miraculous character; inasmuch as it supposes the Deity actually to present himself before his creatures, and to interpose in the affairs of life in a way above the reach of those settled arrangements of nature to the existence of which universal experience bears witness. And as a Revelation itself, so again the evidences of a Revelation may all more or less be considered miraculous. Prophecy is an evidence only so far as foreseeing future events is above the known powers of the human mind, or Miraculous. In like manner, if the rapid extension of Christianity be urged in favour of its divine origin, it is because such extension, under such circumstances, is supposed to be inconsistent with the known principles and capacity of human nature. And the pure morality of the Gospel, as taught by illiterate fishermen of Galilee, is an evidence, in proportion as the phenomenon disagrees with the conclusions of general experience, which leads us to believe that a high state of mental cultivation is ordinarily requisite for the production of such moral teachers. It might even be said that, strictly speaking, no evidence of a Revelation is conceivable which does not

[1] Campbell, On Miracles, Part I. Sec. 2.

partake of the character of a Miracle; since nothing but a display of power over the existing system of things can attest the immediate presence of Him by whom it was originally established; or, again, because no event which results entirely from the ordinary operation of nature can be the criterion of one that is extraordinary.[2]

Miracles commonly so called.

In the present argument we confine ourselves to the consideration of Miracles commonly so called; such events, *i.e.* for the most part as are inconsistent with the constitution of the physical world.

Contrasted with the other branches of evidence for Revelation.

Miracles, thus defined, hold a very prominent place in the evidence of the Jewish and Christian Revelations. They are the most striking and conclusive evidence; because the laws of matter being better understood than those to which mind is conformed, the transgression of them is more easily recognised. They are the most simple and obvious; because, whereas the freedom of the human will resists the imposition of undeviating laws, the material creation, on the contrary, being strictly subjected to the regulation of its Maker, looks to him alone for a change in its constitution. Yet Miracles are but a branch of the evidences, and other branches have their respective advantages. Prophecy, as has been often observed, is a growing evidence, and appeals more forcibly to those who are acquainted with the Miracles only through testimony. A Philosophical mind will perhaps be most strongly affected by the fact of the very existence of the Jewish polity, or of the revolution effected by Christianity. While the beautiful moral teaching and evident honesty of the New Testament writers is the most persuasive argument to the unlearned but single-hearted inquirer. Nor must it be forgotten that the evidences for Revelation are *cumulative*, that they gain strength from each other; and that, in consequence, the argument from Miracles is immensely stronger when viewed *in conjunction with the rest*, than when considered separately as in an inquiry of the present nature.

Cogency of separate Miracles, as proofs of supernatural agency, varies.

As the relative force of the separate evidences is different under different circumstances, so again has one class of Miracle more or less weight than another, according to the accidental change of times, places, and persons addressed. As our knowledge of the system of nature, and of the circumstances of the particular case varies, so of course varies our conviction. Walking on the sea, for instance, or giving sight to one born blind, would to us perhaps be a Miracle even more astonishing than it was to the Jews; the laws of nature being at the present day better understood than formerly, and the fables concerning Magical power being no longer credited. On the other hand, stilling the wind and waves with a word may by all but eye-witnesses be set down to accident or exaggeration without

[2] Hence it is that in the Scripture accounts of Revelations to the prophets, &c. a *sensible* Miracle is so often asked and given; as if the vision itself, which was the *medium* of the Revelation, was not a sufficient evidence of it, as being perhaps resolvable into the *ordinary* powers of an excited imagination, *e.g.* Judg. vi. 36—40, &c.

the possibility of a full confutation; yet to eye-witnesses it would carry with it an overpowering evidence of supernatural agency by the voice and manner that accompanied the command, the violence of the wind at the moment, the instantaneous effect produced, and other circumstances, the force of which a narration cannot fully convey. The same remark applies to the Miracle of changing water into wine, to the cure of demoniacal possessions, and of diseases generally. From a variety of causes, then, it happens that Miracles which produced a rational conviction at the time when they took place, have ever since proved rather an objection to Revelation than an evidence for it, and have depended on the rest for support; while others, which once were of a dubious and perplexing character, have in succeeding Ages come forward in its defence. It is by a process similar to this that the anomalous nature of the Mosaic polity, which might once be an obstacle to its reception, is now justly alleged in proof of the very Miracles by which it was then supported.[3] It is important to keep this remark in view, as it is no uncommon practice with those who are ill-affected to the cause of revealed Religion, to dwell upon such Miracles as at *the present day* rather require than contribute evidence, as if they formed a part of the *present* proof on which it rests its pretensions.[4]

Miracles do not of themselves prove the being of a Creator:

In the foregoing remarks, the being of an intelligent Maker has been throughout assumed; and, indeed, if the *peculiar* object of a Miracle be to *evidence a message from God*, it is plain that it implies the admission of the fundamental truth, and demands assent to another beyond it. His *particular interference* it directly *proves*, while it only *reminds* of his *existence*. It professes to be the signature of God to a message delivered by human instruments; and therefore supposes that signature in some degree already known, from his ordinary works. It appeals to that moral sense and that experience of human affairs which already bear witness to his ordinary presence. Considered *by itself*, it is at most but the token of a superhuman being. Hence, though an *additional instance*, it is not a *distinct species* of evidence for a Creator from that contained in the general marks of order and design in the universe. A proof drawn from an *interruption* in the course of nature is in the same *line of argument* as one deduced from the *existence* of that course, and in point of cogency is inferior to it. Were a being who had experience only of a chaotic world suddenly introduced into this orderly system of things, he would have an infinitely more powerful argument for the existence of a designing Mind, than a mere interruption of that

[3] See Sumner's "Records of Creation," Vol. I.

[4] See Hume, On Miracles: "let us examine those Miracles related in Scripture, and, *not to lose ourselves in too wide a field*, let us *confine* ourselves to such as we find in the *Pentateuch*, &c. It gives an account of the state of the world and of human nature entirely different from the present; of our fall from that state; of the age of man extended to near a thousand years," &c. See Berkeley's "Minute Philosopher," Dial. VI. § 30.

system can afford. A Miracle is no argument to one who is deliberately, and on principle, an atheist.

Yet lead to belief in that doctrine.

Yet, though not abstractedly the more convincing, it is often so in effect, as being of a more striking and imposing character. The mind, habituated to the regularity of nature, is blunted to the overwhelming evidence it conveys; whereas by a Miracle it may be roused to reflection, till mere conviction of a superhuman being becomes the first step towards the acknowledgment of a Supreme power. While, moreover, it surveys nature *as a whole*, it is not capacious enough to embrace its bearings, and to comprehend what it implies. In Miraculous displays of power the field of view is narrowed; a detached portion of the divine operations is taken as an instance, and the Final Cause is distinctly pointed out. A Miracle, besides, is more striking, inasmuch as it displays the Deity in action; evidence of which is not supplied in the system of nature. It may then *accidentally* br ng conviction of an intelligent Creator; for it voluntarily proffers a testimony which we have ourselves to extort from the ordinary course of things, and forces upon the attention a truth which otherwise is not discovered, except upon examination.

They may prove the moral government of God.

And as it affords a more *striking* evidence of a Creator than that conveyed in the order and established laws of the Universe, still more so does it of a Moral Governor. For, while *nature* attests the being of God more distinctly than it does his moral government, a *Miraculous event*, on the contrary, bears more directly on the fact of his moral government, of which it is an immediate instance, while it only implies his existence. Hence, besides banishing ideas of Fate and Necessity, Miracles have a tendency to rouse conscience, to awaken to a sense of responsibility, to remind of duty, and to direct the attention to those marks of divine government already contained in the ordinary course of events.[6]

Hitherto, however, we have spoken of solitary Miracles; a *system* of Miraculous interpositions, conducted with reference to a Final Cause, supplies a still more beautiful and convincing argument for the moral government of God.

II.

ON THE ANTECEDENT CREDIBILITY OF A MIRACLE, CONSIDERED AS A DIVINE INTERPOSITION.

Miracles, being facts, can be proved only by means of Testimony.

In proof of Miraculous occurrences, we must have recourse to the same *kind* of evidence as that by which we determine the truth of Historical accounts in general. For though Miracles, in consequence of their extraordinary nature, challenge a fuller and more accurate

[6] Farmer, On Miracles, Ch. I. Sec. 2.

investigation, still they do not admit an investigation conducted on different principles,—Testimony being the only assignable medium of proof for past events of any kind. And this being indisputable, it is almost equally so that the Christian Miracles are attested by evidence even stronger than can be produced for any of those Historical facts which we most firmly believe. This has been felt by unbelievers; who have been, in consequence, led to deny the *admissibility* of even the strongest Testimony, if offered in behalf of Miraculous events, and thus to get rid of the only means by which they can be proved to have taken place. It has accordingly been asserted, that all events inconsistent with the course of nature bear in their very front, such strong and decisive marks of falsehood and absurdity, that it is needless to examine the evidence adduced for them.[6] "Where men are heated by zeal and enthusiasm," says Hume, with a distant but evident allusion to the Christian Miracles, "there is no degree of human Testimony so strong as may not be procured for the greatest absurdity; and those who will be so silly as to examine the affair *by that medium*, and seek particular flaws in the Testimony, are almost sure to be confounded."[7] Of these antecedent objections, which are supposed to decide the question, the most popular is founded on the frequent occurrence of wonderful tales in every Age and country, generally too connected with Religion; and since the more we are in a situation to examine these accounts, the more fabulous they are proved to be, there would certainly be hence a fair presumption against the Scripture narrative, did it resemble them in its circumstances and proposed object. A more refined argument is that advanced by Hume, in the first part of his *Essay on Miracles*, in which it is maintained against the credibility of a Miracle, that it is more improbable that the Miracle should be true than that the Testimony should be false.

Objections against the admissibility of Testimony.

This latter objection has been so ably met by various writers, that, though prior in the order of the argument to the other, it need not be considered here. It derives its force from the *assumption*, that a Miracle is strictly a *causeless phenomenon*, a *self-originating violation of nature;* and is solved by referring the event to *divine agency*, a principle which (it cannot be denied) has originated works indicative of power at least as great as any Miracle requires. An adequate cause being thus found for the production of a Miracle, the objection vanishes, as far as the mere question of power is concerned; and it remains to be considered whether the anomalous fact be of such a character as to *admit* of being referred to the Supreme Being. For if it cannot with propriety be referred to him, it remains as improbable as if no such agent were known to exist. At

Divine agency the cause of Miracles.

[6] *I.E.* it is pretended to try *past* events on the principles used in conjecturing *future;* viz. on antecedent probability and examples. (Treatise on Rhetoric, Ch. I. Sec. 3.) See Leland's "Supplement to View of Deistical Writers," Let. 3.

[7] Essays, Vol. II. Note L.

this point, then, we propose taking up the argument; and by examining *what* Miracles are in their nature and circumstances referable to divine agency, we shall be providing a reply to the former of the objections just noticed, in which the alleged *similarity* of *all* Miraculous narratives one to another, was made a reason for a common rejection of all. And it is to an inquiry of this nature, that a memoir of Apollonius properly gives rise.

All Miracles not referable to divine agency.

In examining *what* Miracles may properly be ascribed to the Deity, Hume supplies us with an observation so just, when taken in its full extent, that we shall make it the groundwork of the inquiry on which we are entering. As the Deity, he says, discovers himself to us by his works, we have no rational grounds for ascribing to him attributes or actions dissimilar from those which his works convey. It follows then, that in discriminating between those Miracles which can and those which cannot be ascribed to God, we must be guided by the information with which *experience* furnishes us concerning his wisdom, goodness, and other attributes. Since a Miracle is an act out of the known track of divine agency, as regards the *physical* system, it is almost indispensable to show its consistency with the divine agency, at least, in some *other* point of view; if (*i.e.*) it is to be recognised as the work of the same power. Now, we contend that this reasonable demand *is* satisfied in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, in which we find a narrative of Miracles altogether answering in their character and circumstances to those general ideas which the ordinary course of divine providence enables us to form concerning the attributes and actions of God.

The Scripture Miracles profess to be the result of the Moral system:

While writers expatiate so largely on the laws of nature, they altogether forget the existence of a *Moral* system; a system, which though but partially understood, and but general in its appointments as acting upon free agents, is as intelligible in its laws and provisions as the material world. Connected with this Moral government, we find certain instincts of mind; such as conscience, a sense of responsibility, and an approbation of virtue; an innate desire of knowledge, and an almost universal feeling of the necessity of Religious observances: while, in fact, Virtue is on the whole rewarded and Vice punished. And though we meet with many and striking anomalies, yet it is evident they are but anomalies, and possibly but in appearance so, and with reference to our partial information.[8]

Interfering with the Physical:

These two systems, the Physical and the Moral, sometimes act in unison, and sometimes in opposition to each other; and as the order of nature certainly does in many cases interfere with the operation of Moral laws, (as *e.g.* when good men die prematurely, or the gifts of nature are continued to the bad,) there is nothing to shock probability in the idea that a great Moral object should be effected by

[8] See Butler's "Analogy," Part I. Ch. III.

an interruption of Physical order. But, further than this, however Physical laws may embarrass the operation of the Moral system, still on the whole they are subservient to it; contributing, as is evident, to the welfare and convenience of Man, providing for his mental gratification as well as animal enjoyment, sometimes even supplying correctives to his Moral disorders. If then the economy of nature has so constant a reference to an ulterior plan, a Miracle is a deviation from the subordinate for the sake of the superior system, and is very far indeed from improbable, when a great Moral end cannot be effected except at the expense of Physical regularity. Nor can it be fairly said to argue an imperfection in the divine plans, that this interference should be necessary. For we must view the system of Providence *as a whole;* which is not more imperfect because of the mutual action of its parts, than a machine the separate wheels of which affect each other's movements.

That is to be the criterion and evidence of a Revelation.

Now the Miracles of the Jewish and Christian Religions must be considered as immediate effects of divine power beyond the action of nature, for an important Moral end; and are in consequence accounted for by producing not a *physical* but a *final* cause.[9] We are not left to contemplate the bare anomalies, and from the mere necessity of the case to refer them to the supposed agency of the Deity. The power of displaying them is, according to the Scripture narrative, intrusted to certain individuals, who stand forward as their interpreters, giving them a voice and language, and a dignity demanding our regard; who set them forth as evidences of the greatest of Moral ends, a Revelation from God,—as instruments in his hand of effecting a direct intercourse between himself and his creatures, *which otherwise could not have been effected,*—as vouchers for the truth of a message which they deliver.[10] This is plain and intelligible; there is an easy connexion between the Miraculous nature of their works and the truth of their words; the *fact* of their superhuman power is a reasonable ground for *belief* in their superhuman knowledge. Considering, then, our instinctive sense of duty and moral obligation, yet the weak sanction which reason gives to the practice of Virtue, and withal the uncertainty of the mind when advancing beyond the first elements of right and wrong; considering, moreover, the feeling which wise men have entertained of the need of some heavenly guide to instruct and confirm them in goodness, and that unextinguishable desire for a divine message which

[9] Divine Legation, Book IX. Ch. V. Vince, On Miracles, Serm. I.

[10] As, for instance, Exod. iv. 1—9, 29—31; vii. 9, 17; Numb. xvi. 3, 28, 29; Deut. iv. 36—40; xviii. 21, 22; Josh. iii. 7—13; 1 Sam. x. 1—7; xii. 16—19; 1 Kings xiii. 3; xvii. 24; xviii. 36—39; 2 Kings i. 6, 10; v. 15; xx. 8—11; Jer. xxviii. 15—17; Ezek. xxxiii 33; Matt. x. 1—20; xi. 3—5, 20—24; Mark xvi. 15—20; Luke i. 18—20; ii. 11, 12; v. 24; vii. 15, 16; ix. 2; x. 9; John ii. 22; iii. 2; v. 36, 37; ix. 33; x. 24—38; xi. 15, 41, 42; xiii. 19; xiv. 10, 11, 29; xvi. 4; xx. 30, 31; Acts i. 8; ii. 22, 33; iii. 15, 16; iv. 33; v. 32; viii. 6; x. 38; xiii. 8—12; xiv. 3; Rom. xv. 18, 19; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5; 2 Cor. xii. 12; Heb. ii. 3, 4; Rev. xix. 10.

has led men in all ages to acquiesce even in pretended Revelations, rather than forego the consolation thus afforded them; and again, the possibility (to say the least) of our being destined for a future state of being, the nature and circumstances of which it may concern us much to know, though from nature we know nothing; considering, lastly, our experience of a watchful and merciful Providence, and the impracticability already noticed of a Revelation without a Miracle—it is hardly too much to affirm, that the Moral system points to an interference with the course of nature, and that Miracles wrought in evidence of a divine communication, instead of being antecedently improbable, are, when directly attested, entitled to a respectful and impartial consideration.

Objections to the Scripture Miracles are founded on a forgetfulness of the Moral system.

When the various antecedent objections which ingenious men have urged against Miracles are brought together, they will be found nearly all to arise from forgetfulness of the existence of Moral laws.[11] In their zeal to perfect the laws of matter they most unphilosophically overlook a more sublime system, which contains disclosures not only of the *Being* but of the *Will* of God. Thus Hume, in a passage above alluded to, observes, "Though the Being to whom the Miracle is ascribed be Almighty, it does not, upon that account, become a whit more probable; since it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a Being, otherwise than from the experience which we have of his productions *in the usual course of nature*. This still reduces us to past observation, and obliges us to compare the instances of the violation of truth in the testimony of men with those of the violation of the *laws of nature* by Miracles, in order to judge which of them is most likely and probable." Here the Moral government of God, *with the course of which the Miracle entirely accords*, is altogether kept out of sight. With a like heedlessness of the Moral character of a Miracle, another writer, notorious for his irreligion,[12] objects that it argues mutability in the Deity, and implies that the Physical system was not created good, as needing improvement. And a recent author adopts a similarly partial and inconclusive mode of reasoning, when he confuses the Christian Miracles with fables of apparitions and witches, and would examine them on the strict principle of those legal forms which from their secular object go far to exclude all *Religious* discussion of the question.[13] Such reasoners seem to suppose, that when the agency of the Deity is introduced to account for Miracles, it is the illogical introduction of an unknown cause, a reference to a mere name, the offspring perhaps of popular superstition; or, if more than a name, to a cause that can be known only by means of the Physical creation; and hence they consider Religion as founded in the mere weakness or eccentricity of the intellect, not in actual intimations of a divine government as contained in the moral world.

[11] Vince, On Miracles, Serm. I. [12] Voltaire.
[13] Bentham, Preuves Judiciaires, Liv. VIII.

From an apparent impatience of investigating a system which is but partially revealed, they esteem the laws of the material system alone worthy the notice of a scientific mind; and rid themselves of the annoyance which the importunity of a claim to Miraculous power occasions them, by discarding all the circumstances which fix its antecedent probability, all in which one Miracle differs from another, the professed author, object, design, character, and human instruments.

Enumeration of circumstances in which the Scripture Miracles fall in with the known attributes of God.

When this partial procedure is resisted, the *à priori* objections of sceptical writers at once lose their force. Facts are only so far improbable as they fall under no general rule; whereas it is as parts of an existing system that the Miracles of Scripture demand our attention, as resulting from known attributes of God, and corresponding to the ordinary arrangements of his providence. Even as detached events they might excite a rational awe towards the mysterious Author of nature. But they are presented to us, not as unconnected and unmeaning occurrences, but as holding a place in an extensive plan of divine government, completing the Moral system, connecting Man with his Maker, and introducing him to the means of securing his happiness in another and eternal state of being. That such is the professed object of the body of Christian Miracles, can hardly be denied. In the earlier Religion it was substantially the same, though from the preparatory nature of the dispensation, a less enlarged view was given of the divine counsels. The express purpose of the Jewish Miracles is to confirm the natural evidence of one God, the Creator of all things, to display his attributes and will with distinctness and authority, and to enforce the obligation of Religious observances, and show the sin of idolatrous worship.[14] Whether we turn to the earlier or latter Ages of Judaism, in the plagues of Egypt; in the parting of Jordan, and the arresting of the Sun's course by Joshua; in the harvest thunder at the prayer of Samuel; in the rending of the altar at Bethel; in Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel; and in the cure of Naaman by Elisha; we recognise this one grand object throughout. Not even in the earliest ages of the Scripture history are Miracles wrought at random, or causelessly, or to amuse the fancy, or for the sake of mere display: nor prodigally, for the mere conviction of individuals, but for the most part on a grand scale, in the face of the world, to supply whole nations with evidence concerning the Deity. Nor are they strewn confusedly over the face of the history, being with few exceptions reducible to three eras; the formation of the Hebrew Church and Polity, the reformation in the times of the idolatrous Kings of Israel, and the promulgation of the Gospel. Let it be observed, moreover, that the power of working them, instead of

[14] Exod. iii.—xiv.; xx. 22, 23; xxxiv. 6—17; Deut. iv. 32—40; Josh. ii. 10, 11; iv. 23, 24; 1 Sam. v. 3, 4; xii. 18; 2 Sam. vii. 23; 1 Kings viii. 59, 60; xviii. 36, 37; xx. 28; 2 Kings xix. 15—19, 35; 2 Chron. xx. 29; Isa. vi. 1—5; xix. 1; xliii. 10—12.

being assumed by any classes of men indiscriminately, is described as a prerogative of the occasional Prophets to the exclusion of the Priests and Kings; a circumstance which, not to mention its remarkable contrast to the natural course of an imposture, is deserving attention from its consistency with the leading design of Miracles already specified. For the respective claims of the Kings and Priests were already ascertained, when once the sacred office was limited to the family of Aaron, and the regal power to David and his descendants; whereas extraordinary messengers, as Moses, Samuel, and Elijah, needed some supernatural display of power to authenticate their pretensions. In corroboration of this remark we may observe the unembarrassed manner of the Prophets in the exercise of their professed gift; their disdain of argument or persuasion, and the confidence with which they appeal to those before whom they are said to have worked their Miracles.

These and similar observations do more than invest the *separate* Miracles with a dignity worthy of the Supreme Being; they show the *coincidence* of them *all* in one common and consistent object. As parts of a system, the Miracles recommend and attest each other, evidencing not only general *wisdom*, but a digested and extended *plan*. And while this appearance of design connects them with the acknowledged works of a Creator, who is in the natural world chiefly known to us by the presence of final causes, so, again, a plan conducted as this was, through a series of ages, evinces not the varying will of successive individuals, but the steady and sustained purpose of one Sovereign Mind. And this remark especially applies to the coincidence of views observable between the Old and New Testament; the latter of which, though written after a long interval of silence, the breaking up of the former system, a revolution in Religious discipline, and the introduction of Oriental tenets into the popular Theology, still unhesitatingly takes up and maintains the ancient principles of Miraculous interposition.

An additional recommendation of the Scripture Miracles is their appositeness to the times and places in which they were wrought; as, *e.g.* in the case of the plagues of Egypt, which, it has been shown,[15] were directed against the prevalent superstitions of that country. Their originality, beauty, and immediate utility, are further properties falling in with our conceptions of divine agency. In their general character we discover nothing indecorous, light, or ridiculous; they are grave, simple, unambiguous, majestic. Many of them, especially those of the later dispensation, are remarkable for their benevolent and merciful character; others are useful for a variety of subordinate purposes, as a pledge of the certainty of particular promises, or as comforting good men, or as edifying the Church. Nor must we overlook the moral instruction conveyed in

[15] See Bryant.

many, particularly in those ascribed to Christ, the Spiritual interpretation which they will often bear, and the exemplification which they afford of particular doctrines.[16]

Accepting then what may be called Hume's canon, that *no work can be reasonably ascribed to the agency of God, which is altogether different from those ordinary works from which our knowledge of him is originally obtained*, we have shown that the Miracles of Scripture, far from being exceptionable on that account, are strongly recommended by their coincidence with what we know from nature of *his Providence and Moral attributes.* That there are some few among them in which this coincidence cannot be traced, it is not necessary to deny. As a whole they bear a determinate and consistent character, being great and extraordinary means for attaining a great, momentous, and extraordinary object.

Tests, derived from our knowledge of the divine attributes, by which all but Scripture Miracles are excluded.

We shall not however dismiss this criterion of the antecedent probability of a Miracle with which Hume has furnished us, without showing that it is more or less detrimental to the pretensions of *all* professed Miracles *but* those of the Jewish and Christian Revelations:—in other words, that none else are likely to have occurred, because none else can with any probability be referred to the agency of the Deity, the only known cause of miraculous interposition. We exclude then

1. THOSE WHICH ARE NOT EVEN REFERRED BY THE WORKERS OF THEM TO DIVINE AGENCY.

Miracles not from God.

Such are the extraordinary works attributed by some to Zoroaster; and, again, to Pythagoras, Empedocles, Apollonius, and others of their School; which only claim to be the result of their superior wisdom, and were quite independent of a Supreme Being.[17] Such are the supposed effects of witchcraft or of magical charms, which profess to originate with Spirits and Demons; for, as these agents, supposing them to exist, did not make the world, there is every reason for thinking they cannot of themselves alter its arrangements.[18] And those, as in some accounts of apparitions, which are silent respecting their origin, and are referred to God from the mere necessity of the case.

[16] Jones, On the Figurative Language of Scripture, Lect. 10. Farmer, On Miracles, Ch. III. Sec. 6, 2.

[17] See, in contrast, Gen. xl. 8; xli. 16; Dan. ii. 27—30, 47; Acts iii. 12—16; xiv. 11—18; a contrast sustained, as these passages show, for 1500 years.

[18] Sometimes charms are represented as having an inherent virtue, independent of invisible agents, as in the account given by Josephus of Eleazar's drawing out a devil through the nostrils of a patient by means of a ring, which contained in it a drug prescribed by Solomon. Joseph. Antiq. VIII. 2, Sec. 5. See Acts viii. 19.

2. THOSE WHICH ARE UNWORTHY OF AN ALL-WISE AUTHOR.

Miracles unworthy of God.

As, for example, the Miracles of Simon Magus, who pretended he could assume the appearance of a serpent, exhibit himself with two faces, and transform himself into whatever shape he pleased.[19] Such are most of the Miracles recorded in the apocryphal accounts of Christ:[20] *e.g.* the sudden ceasing of all kinds of motion at his birth, birds stopping in the midst of their flight, men at table with their hands to their mouths yet unable to eat, &c.; his changing, when a child, his playmates into kids, and animating clay figures of beasts and birds; the practice attributed to him of appearing to his disciples sometimes as a youth, sometimes as an old man, sometimes as a child, sometimes large, sometimes less, sometimes so tall as to reach the Heavens; and the obeisance paid him by the military standards when he was brought before Pilate. Of the same cast is the story of his picture presented by Nicodemus to Gamaliel, which when pierced by the Jews gave forth blood and water. Under this head of exception fall many of the Miracles related by the fathers:[21] *e.g.* that of the consecrated bread changing into a live coal in the hands of a woman, who came to the Lord's supper after offering incense to an idol; of the dove issuing from the body of Polycarp at his martyrdom; of the petrifaction of a fowl dressed by a person under a vow of abstinence; of the exorcism of the demoniac camel; of the stones shedding tears at the barbarity of the persecutions; of inundations rising up to the roofs of churches without entering the open doors; and of pieces of gold, as fresh as from the mint, dropt from heaven into the laps of the Italian Monks. Of the same character are the Miracles of the Romish Breviary; as the prostration of wild beasts before the martyrs they were about to devour; the Miraculous uniting of two chains with which St. Peter had been at different times bound; and the burial of Paul the Hermit by lions. Such again are the Rabbinical Miracles, as that of the flies killed by lightning for settling on a Rabbi's paper. And the Miracles ascribed by some to Mohammed, as that the trees went out to meet him, the stones saluted him, and a camel complained to him.[22] The exorcism in the Book of Tobit must here be mentioned, in which the Evil Spirit who is in love with Sara is driven away by the smell of certain perfumes.[23] Hence the Scripture accounts of Eve's temptation by the serpent; of the speaking of Balaam's ass; of Jonah and the whale; and of the Devils sent into the herd of swine, are *by themselves* more or less improbable, being unequal in dignity

[19] Lavington, Enthusiasm of Meth. and Papists comp. Part III. Sec. 43.

[20] Jones, On the Canon, Part III.

[21] Middleton, Free Inquiry.

[22] The offensiveness of these, and many others above instanced, consists in attributing *moral* feelings to inanimate or irrational beings.

[23] It seems to have been a common notion that possessed persons were beloved by the Spirit that distressed them. See Philostr. IV. 25.—Gospel of the Infancy, XIV.—XVI. XXXIII. Justin Martyr, Apol. p. 113, Ed. Thirlb. We find nothing of this kind in the account of the Scripture demoniacs.

to the rest. They are then supported by the system in which they are found, as being a few out of a multitude, and therefore but exceptions (and, as we suppose, but *apparent* exceptions) to the general rule. In some of them, too, a further purpose is discernible, which of itself reconciles us to the strangeness of their first appearance, and suggests the possibility of similar reasons, though unknown, being assigned in explanation of the rest. As the Miracle of the swine, the object of which may have been to prove to us the reality of demoniacal possessions.[24]

Miracles of mere power, even when connected with some ultimate object, are often improbable for the same general reason, viz. as unworthy of an All-wise Author. Such as that ascribed to Zoroaster,[25] of suffering melted brass to be poured upon his breast without injury to himself. Unless indeed their immediate design be to exemplify the greatness of God, as in the descent of fire from heaven upon Elijah's sacrifice, and in Christ's walking on the sea,[26] which evidently possess a dignity fitting them to be works of the Supreme Being. The propriety indeed of the Christian Miracles, contrasted with the want of decorum observable in those elsewhere related, forms a most striking evidence of their divinity.

Here, too, *ambiguous* Miracles find a place, it being antecedently improbable that the Almighty should rest the credit of his Revelation upon events which but obscurely implied his immediate presence.

And, for the same reason, those are in some measure improbable *which are professed by different Religions;* because from a divine agent may be expected distinct and peculiar specimens of divine agency. Hence the claims to supernatural power in the primitive Church are in general questionable, as *resting* upon the exorcism of Evil Spirits, and the cure of diseases; works, not only less satisfactory than others, as evidence of a Miraculous interposition, but suspicious from the circumstance, that they were exhibited also by Jews and Gentiles of the same age.[27] In the plagues of Egypt and Elijah's sacrifice, which seem to be of this class, there is a direct contest between two parties; and the object of the divine messenger is to show his own superiority in the very point in which his adversaries try their powers. Our Saviour's use of the clay in restoring

[24] Divine Legation, Book IX. Ch. V.

[25] Brucker, Vol. I. p. 147.

[26] Power over the elements conveyed the most striking proof of Christ's mission from the God of nature, who in the Old Testament is frequently characterised as ruling the sea, winds, &c. Ps. lxv. 7; lxxvii. 19; Job xxxviii. 11, &c. It is said, that a drawing of feet upon the water was the hieroglyphic for impossibility. Christ moreover designed, it appears, to make trial of his disciples' faith by this Miracle. See Matt. xiv. 28—31; Mark vi. 52. We read of the power to "move mountains," but evidently as a proverbial expression. The transfiguration, if it need be mentioned, has a *doctrinal* sense, and seems besides to have been intended to lead the minds of the Apostles to the consideration of the Spiritual Kingdom. One of Satan's temptations was to induce our Lord to work a Miracle of mere power. Matt. iv. 6, 7. See Acts x. 38, for the general character of the Miracles.

[27] Middleton. Stillingfleet, Orig. Sacr. II. 9, Sec. 1.

sight has been accounted for on a similar principle, such external means being in repute among the Heathen in their pretended cures.

3. THOSE WHICH HAVE NO PROFESSED OBJECT.

Miracles without object.

Hence a suspicion is thrown on all miracles ascribed by the Apocryphal Gospels to Christ in his *infancy;* for, being prior to his preaching, they seem to attest no doctrine, and are but distantly connected with any object.—Those again on which an object seems to be *forced.* Hence many harmonizing in one plan arrest the attention more powerfully than a detached and solitary Miracle, as converging to one point, and pressing upon our notice the end for which they are wrought. This remark, as far as it goes, is prejudicial to the Miracle wrought (as it is said) in Hunneric's persecution, long after the real age of Miracles was past; when the Athanasian confessors are reported to have retained the power of speech after the loss of their tongues.

Those, too, must be viewed with suspicion *which are disjoined from human instruments, and are made the vehicle of no message;* [28] since, according to our foregoing view, Miracles are only then divested of their *à priori* improbability when furthering some great Moral end, such as authenticating a divine communication. It is an objection then to those ascribed to relics generally, and in particular to those attributed to the tomb of the Abbé Paris, that they are left to tell their own story, and are but distantly connected with any object whatever. As it is, again, to many tales of apparitions, that they do not admit of a meaning, and consequently demand at most only an *otiose* assent, as Paley terms it. Hence there is a difficulty in the narrative contained in the first verses of John v.; because we cannot reduce the account of the descent of the angel into the water to give it a healing power under any known arrangement of the divine economy. We receive it, then, on the general credit of the Revelation of which it forms part.[29]

For the same reason, *viz.* the want of a declared object, a prejudice is excited *when the professed worker is silent, or diffident as to his own power;* since our general experience of Providence leads us to suppose that Miraculous powers will not be committed to an individual who is not also prepared for his office by secret inspiration. This speaks strongly against the cures ascribed by Tacitus to Vespasianus, and would be an objection to our crediting the prediction uttered by Caiaphas, if separated from its context, or prominently brought forward to rest an argument upon. It is in general a characteristic of the Scripture system, that Miracles and inspiration go together.[30]—With a view to specify the object distinctly, some have required that the Miracle should be wrought

[28] Farmer, On Miracles, Ch. V.

[29] The verse containing the account of the Angel is wanting in many MSS. of authority, and is marked as suspicious by Griesbach. The mineral spring of Bethesda is mentioned by Eusebius as celebrated even in his day.

[30] Douglas's Criterion. Warburton, Serm. on Resurrection.

after the delivery of the message.[31] A message delivered an indefinite time after the Miracle, while it cannot but excite attention from the general reputation of the messenger for an extraordinary gift, is not so expressly stamped with divine authority, as when it is ushered in by his claiming, and followed by his displaying, supernatural powers. For if a Miracle, once wrought, ever after sanctions the doctrines taught by the person exhibiting it, it must be attended by the gift of infallibility; a sustained Miracle is inconsistent with that frugality in the application of power which is observable in the general course of Providence.[32] On the other hand, when an unambiguous Miracle, having been first distinctly announced, is wrought with the professed object of sanctioning a message from God, it conveys an irresistible evidence of its divine origin. Accident is thus excluded, and the final cause indissolubly connected with the supernatural event. We may remark that the Miracles of Scripture were generally wrought on this plan.[33] In conformity to which, we find moreover that the Apostles, &c. could not work Miracles *when they pleased;*[34] a circumstance more consistent with our ideas of the divine government, and connecting the extraordinary acts more clearly with specific objects than if the supernatural gifts were unlimited and irrevocable.

Lastly, under this head we may notice Miraculous accounts, *which*, as those concerning Apollonius, *may be separated from a narrative without detriment to it.* The prodigies of Livy, *e.g.* form no part in the action of the history, which is equally intelligible without them.[35] The Miraculous events of the Pentateuch, on the contrary, or of the Gospels and Acts, though of course they may be rejected *together with* the rest of the narrative, can be rejected in no other way; since they form its substance and groundwork, and, like the figure of Phidias on Minerva's shield, cannot be erased without spoiling the entire composition.[36]

[31] Fleetwood, Farmer, and others.

[32] The idea is accordingly discountenanced, Matt. vii. 22, 23; Heb. vi. 4—6; Gal. ii. 11—14.

[33] St. Mark ends his Gospel by saying, that the Apostles "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and *confirming the word by signs* FOLLOWING," ch. xvi. 20. See also Exod. iv. 29, 30; 1 Kings xiii. 2, 3; 2 Kings xx. 8—11; Acts xiv. 3, &c.

[34] *E.G.* Acts xx. 22, 23; Phil. ii. 27; 2 Tim. iv. 20. In the Book of Acts we have not a few instances of the Apostles acting under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues is an exception to the general remark, as we know it was abused; but this from its nature was, when once given, possessed as an ordinary talent, and needed no fresh divine influence for subsequent exercise of it. It may besides be viewed as a *medium* of conveying the message, as well as being the seal of its divinity, and as such needed not in every instance to be marked out as a supernatural gift. Miracles in Scripture are not done by *wholesale*, *i.e.* indiscriminately and at once, without the particular will and act of the gifted individual; the contrary was the case with the cures at the tomb of the Abbé Paris. Acts xix. 11, 12, perhaps forms an exception; but the Miracles there mentioned are expressly said to be *special*, and were intended to put particular honour on the Apostle; Cf. Luke vi. 19; viii. 46, which seem to illustrate John iii. 34.

[35] *E.G.* he says "ADJICIUNT *miracula huic pugnæ*," II. 7.

[36] Whereas other extraordinary accounts are like the statue of the Goddess herself, which could readily be taken to pieces, and resolved into its constituent parts, the precious metal and the stone. For the Jewish Miracles, see Graves, On the Pentateuch, Part I. It has been

4. THOSE WHICH ARE EXCEPTIONABLE AS REGARDS THEIR OBJECT.

Miracles with insufficient object.

If the professed object be *trifling and unimportant;* as in many related by the Fathers, *e.g.* Tertullian's account of the vision of an Angel to prescribe to a female the exact length and measure of her veil, or the divine admonition which Cyprian professes to have received to mix water with wine in the Eucharist, in order to render it efficacious.[37] Among these would be reckoned the directions given to Moses relative to the furnishing of the Tabernacle, and other regulations of the ceremonial law, were not further and important objects thereby affected; such as, separating the Israelites from the surrounding nations, impressing upon them the doctrine of a particular Providence, prefiguring future events, &c.

Miracles wrought for the gratification of mere *curiosity* are referable to this head of objection. Hence the triumphant invitations which some of the Fathers make to their heathen opponents to attend their exorcisms excite an unpleasant feeling in the mind, as degrading a solemn spectacle into a mere popular exhibition.

Those, again, which have a *political or party object;* as the cures ascribed to Vespasianus, or as those attributed to the tomb of the Abbé Paris, and the Eclectic prodigies—all which, viewed in their best light, tend to the mere aggrandizement of a particular Sect, and have little or no reference to the good of Mankind at large. It tells in favour of the Christian Miracles, that the Apostles, generally speaking, were not enabled to work them for their own personal convenience, to avoid danger, escape suffering, or save life. St Paul's preservation from the effects of the viper's bite on the Isle of Melita is a solitary exception to this remark, no mention being made of his availing himself of this Miracle to proselyte the natives to the Christian faith.[38]

For a similar reason, those bear a less appearance of probability which are wrought *for the conviction of individuals.* We have already noticed the contrary character of the Scripture Miracles in this respect: *e.g.* St. Paul's Miraculous conversion did not end with itself, but was followed by momentous and inestimable consequences.[39] Again, Miracles attended the conversions of the Æthiopian Eunuch, Cornelius, and Sergius Paulus; but these were heads and first fruits of different classes of men who were in time to be brought into the Church.[40]

Miracles *with a bad or vicious object* are laden with an extreme antecedent improbability; for they cannot at all be referred to the

observed, that the *discourses* of Christ so constantly grow out of his *Miracles*, that we can hardly admit the former without admitting the latter also. But his *discourses* form his *character*, which is by no means an obvious or easy one to imagine, had it never existed.

[37] Middleton, Free Inquiry.

[38] Rev. J. Blanco White, Against Catholicism, Let. 6. The Breviary Miracles form a striking contrast to the Christian in this point.

[39] Acts xxvi. 16.

[40] Ibid. viii. 26, 39; x. 3, &c.; xiii. 12. These three classes are mentioned together in prophecy. Isa. lvi. 4—8.

only known cause of supernatural power, the agency of God. Such are most of the fables concerning the heathen Deities; not a few of the professed Miracles of the primitive Church, which are wrought to sanction doctrines opposed not only to Scriptural truth but to the light of nature;[41] and some related in the Apocryphal Gospels, especially Christ's inflicting death upon a schoolmaster who threatened to strike him, and on a boy who happened to run violently against him.[42] Here must be noticed several passages in Scripture, in which a Miraculous gift seems at first sight to be exercised to gratify revengeful feelings, and which are, therefore, received on the credit of the system.[43]

Unnecessary Miracles are improbable; as, those wrought for an object attainable without an exertion, or with less exertion, of extraordinary power.[44] Of this kind, we contend, would be the writing of the Gospel on the skies, which some unbelievers have proposed as but an adequate attestation to a Revelation; for, *supposing* the recorded fact of their once occurring be sufficient for a rational conviction, a perpetual Miracle becomes superfluous.[45]—Such, again, would be the preservation of the text of Scripture in its verbal correctness, which many have supposed necessary for its infallibility as a standard of Truth.—The same antecedent objection presses on Miracles wrought *in attestation of truths already known.* We do not, *e.g.* require a Miracle to convince us that the Sun shines, or that Vice is blameable. The Socinian scheme is in a great measure chargeable with bringing the Miracles of the Gospel under this censure; for it prunes away the Christian system till little is left for the Miracles to attest. On this ground an objection has been taken to the Miracle wrought in favour of the Athanasians in Hunneric's persecution, as above mentioned; inasmuch as it merely professes to authorize a comment on the sacred text, *i.e.* to sanction a truth which is not *new*, unless Scripture be *obscure.*[46]—Here, too, may be noticed Miracles wrought *in evidence of doctrines already established;* such as those of the Papists, who seem desirous of answering the unbeliever's demand for a perpetual Miracle. Popish Miracles, as has often been observed, occur in Popish countries, where they are least wanted; whereas, if real, they would be invaluable among Protestants. Hence the primitive Miracles become

[41] *E.G.* to establish Monachism, &c.

[42] Jones, On the Canon, Part III.

[43] Gen. ix. 24—27; Judges xvi. 28—30; 2 Kings ii. 24; 2 Chron. xxiv. 22.

[44] It does not follow, because all Miracles are equally *easy* to an Almighty author that all are equally *probable;* for, as has been often remarked, a frugality in the application of power is observable throughout his works.

[45] Dr. Graves observes, of the Miraculous agency in the Age of Moses and Joshua, that "God continued it *only so long as* was indispensably necessary to introduce and settle the Jewish nation in the land of their inheritance, and establish this dispensation so as to answer the purposes of the divine economy. After this, he gradually withdrew his supernatural assistance; he left the nation collectively and individually to act according to their own choice," &c. Lectures on the Pentateuch, Part III. Lect. 2.

[46] See Maclaine's Note on the subject, Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. Cent. V. Part II. Ch. V.

suspicious, in proportion as we find Christianity established, not only from the increasing facility of fraud, but moreover from the apparent needlessness of the extraordinary display. And hence, admitting the Miracles of Christ and his followers, future Miracles with the same end are somewhat improbable. For enough have been wrought to *attest* the doctrine; and *attention*, when once excited by supernatural means, may be kept alive by a standing Ministry, just as inspiration is supplied by human learning.

We proceed to notice *inconsistency in the objects proposed*, as creating a just prejudice against the validity of Miraculous pretensions. This applies to the claims of the Romish Church, in which Miracles are wrought by hostile Sects in support of discordant tenets.[47] It constitutes some objection to the bulk of the Miracles of the primitive Church, when viewed as a *continuation* of the original gift, that they differ so much in manner, design, and attendant circumstances, from those recorded in Scripture. "We see," says Middleton, (in the ages subsequent to the Christian era) "a dispensation of things ascribed to God, quite different from that which we meet with in the New Testament. For in those days, the power of working Miracles was committed to none but the Apostles, and to a few of the most eminent of the other disciples, who were particularly commissioned to propagate the Gospel and preside in the Church of Christ. But upon the pretended revival of the same powers in the following Ages, we find the administration of them committed, not to those who were intrusted with the government of the Church, not to the successors of the Apostles, to the Bishops, the Martyrs, nor to the principal champions of the Christian cause; but to *boys*, to *women*, and, above all, *to private and obscure laymen*, not only of an inferior but sometimes also of a *bad character*.[48] —Hence, to avoid the charge of inconsistency in the respective objects of the Jewish and Christian Miracles, it is incumbent upon believers in them to show that the difference between the two systems is a difference in appearance only, and that Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the Law. Here, *as far as its antecedent appearance is concerned*, the Miracle said to have occurred on Julian's attempt to rebuild the Jewish Temple is seen to great advantage. The object was great, the time critical, its consequences harmonize very happily with the economy of the Mosaic dispensa-

[47] Douglas, Criterion, p. 105, Note, (8vo edit. 1807.)

[48] Scripture *sometimes* attributes Miraculous gifts to men of bad character; but we have no reason for supposing such could work Miracles at pleasure, (see Numb. xxii. 18; xxiii. 3, 8, 12, 20; xxiv. 10—13,) or attest any doctrine but that which Christ and his Apostles taught; nor is our faith *grounded* upon their preaching. Moreover, their power may have been given them for some further purpose; for though to attest a divine message be the *primary* object of Miracles, it need not be the only object. "It would be highly ridiculous," says Mr. Penrose in his recent work on Miracles, "to erect a steam engine for the mere purpose of opening and shutting a valve; but the engine being erected is very wisely employed both for this and for many other purposes, which, comparatively speaking, are of very little significance."

tion, and the general spirit of the Prophetical writings, and the fact itself has some correspondence with the prodigies which preceded the final destruction of Jerusalem.[49]

Again, Miracles *which do not tend to the accomplishment of their proposed end* are open to objection; and those *which have not effected what they had in view.* Hence some kind of argument might be derived against the Christian Miracles, were they not accompanied by a prediction of their *temporary* failure in effecting their object; or, to speak more correctly, were it not their proposed object *gradually* to spread the doctrines which they authenticate.[50] There is nothing, however, to break the force of this objection when directed against the Miracles ascribed to the Abbé Paris; since the Jansenist interest, instead of being advanced in consequence of them, soon after lost ground, and was ultimately ruined.[51]

These Miracles are also suspicious, *as having been stopped by human authority;* it being improbable that a divine agent should permit any such interference with his plan. The same objection applies to the professed gift of exorcising demoniacs in the primitive Church; which was gradually lost after the decree of the Council of Laodicea confined the exercise of it to such as were licensed by the Bishop.[52] And lastly, to the supernatural character of Prince Hohenlohe's cures, which were stopped at Bamberg by an order from authority, that none should be wrought except in the presence of Magistrates and Medical practitioners.[53]

The foregoing tests neither disprove,

These are the most obvious objections which may be fairly made to the antecedent probability of miraculous narratives. It will be observed, however, that none of them go so far as to deprive testimony for them of the privilege of being heard. Even where the nature of the facts related forbids us to refer the Miracle to divine agency, as when it is wrought to establish some immoral principle, still it is not more than extremely improbable and to be viewed with strong suspicion. Christians at least must acknowledge that the *à priori* view which Reason takes would in some cases lead to an erroneous conclusion. A Miracle, *e.g.* ascribed to an Evil Spirit is, prior to the information of Scripture, improbable; and if it stood on its own merits would require very strong testimony to establish it, as being referred to an unknown cause. Yet, on the authority of Scripture, we admit the occasional interference of agents short of divine with the course of nature. This, however, only shows that these *à priori* tests are not decisive. Yet if we cannot always

[49] See Warburton's Julian.

[50] See Parables in Matt. xiii. 3, 24, 31, 33, 47; xxiv. 12; Acts xx. 29, 30; 2 Thess. ii. 3; 2 Tim. iii. 1—5, &c.

[51] Paley, Evidences, Part I. Prop. 2.

[52] It had hitherto been in the hands of the meaner sort of the Christian laity. After that time, "few or none of the clergy, nor indeed of the laity, were any longer able to cast out devils; so that the old Christian exorcism or prayer for the energumens in the church began soon after to be omitted as useless." Whiston, in Middleton.

[53] Bentham, Preuves Judiciaires, Liv. VIII. Ch. X.

ascertain what Miracles are improbable, at least we can determine what are not so; moreover, it will still be true that the *more* objections lie against any professed Miracle, the greater suspicion justly attaches to it, and the less important is the fact even if proved.

Nor prove, any professed Miracles to have occurred.

On the other hand, even when the external appearance is altogether in favour of the Miracle, it must be recollected, nothing is thereby *proved* concerning the fact of its occurrence. We have done no more than recommend to notice the evidence, whatever it may be, which is offered in its behalf. Even, then, could Miracles be found with as strong an antecedent case as those of Scripture, still direct testimony must be produced to substantiate their claims on our belief. At the same time, since there are none such, a fair prepossession is indirectly created in favour of the latter, over and above their intrinsic claims on our attention.

They are injurious to some few of the Scripture Miracles.

Some few indeed of the Scripture Miracles are open to exception; and have accordingly been noticed in the course of our remarks as *by themselves* improbable. These, however, are seldom such in more than *one* respect; whereas the other Miracles which came before us were open to *several or all of the specified objections at the same time.* And, further, as they are but a few in the midst of an overpowering majority pointing consistently to one grand object, they must not be torn from their Moral context, but, on the credit of the rest, they must be considered but apparent exceptions to the rule. It is obvious that a large system must consist of various parts of unequal utility and excellence; and to expect each particular occurrence to be complete in itself, is as unreasonable as to require the parts of some complicated machine, separately taken, to be all equally finished and fit for display.[54]

Conclusion of the antecedent question.

Let these remarks suffice on the question of the antecedent probability or improbability of a Miraculous narrative. Enough, it may be hoped, has been said, to separate the Miracles of Scripture from those elsewhere related, and to invest them with an importance exciting in an unprejudiced mind a just interest in their behalf, and a candid attention to the historical testimony on which they rest; inasmuch as they are ascribed to an adequate cause, recommended by an intrinsic dignity, and connected with an important object, while all others are more or less unaccountable, unmeaning, extravagant, and useless. And thus, *viz.* on the ground of this

[54] In thus refusing to admit the existence of *real* exceptions to the general rule, in spite of *appearances*, we are not exposing ourselves to that charge of excessive systematizing which may justly be brought against those who, with Hume, reject the very notion of a Miracle, as implying an interruption of physical regularity. For the *Revelation* which we admit, on the authority of the general system of Miracles, imparts such accurate and extended information concerning the attributes of God, over and above the partial and imperfect view of them which the world affords, as precludes the supposition of *any* work of his being evil or useless. Whereas there is no *voice* in the mere analogy of nature which expressly denies the possibility of real exceptions to its general course.

utter dissimilarity between the Miracles of Scripture and other prodigies, we are enabled to account for the incredulity with which believers in Revelation listen to any extraordinary account at the present day; and which sometimes is urged against them as inconsistent with their assent to the former. It is *because* they admit the Scripture Miracles. Belief in these has pre-occupied their minds, and created a fair presumption against those of a different class;—the prospect of a recurrence of supernatural agency being in some measure discountenanced by the Revelation already given; and, again, the weakness and insipidity, the want of system and connexion, the deficiency in the evidence, and the transient repute of marvellous stories ever since, creating a strong and just prejudice against those similar accounts which from time to time are noised abroad.

III.

ON THE CRITERION OF A MIRACLE, CONSIDERED AS A DIVINE INTERPOSITION.

It has sometimes been asked, whether miracles are a *sufficient evidence* of the interposition of the Deity? under the idea that *other* causes, besides divine agency, might be assigned for their production. This is obviously the converse objection to that we have as yet considered, which was founded on the assumption that they could be referred to *no* known cause whatever. After showing, then, that the Scripture Miracles *may* be ascribed to the Supreme Being, we proceed to show that they *cannot* reasonably be ascribed to those other causes which have been sometimes assigned, *e.g.* to unknown laws of nature, or to the secret agency of Spirits.

Miracles cannot reasonably be referred to the power of Spirits.

1. Now it is evidently unphilosophical to attribute them to the power of invisible Beings, short of God; because, independently of Scripture, (the truth of which, of course, must not be assumed in this question,) we have no evidence of the existence of such beings. Nature attests, indeed, the being of a God, but not of a race of intelligent creatures between Him and Man. In assigning a Miracle, therefore, to the influence of Spirits, an hypothetical cause is introduced merely to remove a difficulty. And even did analogy lead us to admit their possible existence, yet it would tend rather to disprove than to prove their power over the visible creation. They may be confined to their own province, and though superior to Man, still may be unable to do many things which he can effect; just as Man in turn is superior to Birds and Fishes, without having, in consequence, the power of flying or of inhabiting the water.[55]

Still it may be necessary to show, that *on our own principles* we are not open to any charge of inconsistency. For it has been ques-

[55] Campbell, On Miracles, Part II. Sec. 3. Farmer, Ch. II. Sec. 1.

Even though Scripture informs us of their power.

tioned, whether, in admitting the existence and power of Spirits on the authority of Revelation, we are not in danger of invalidating the evidence upon which that authority rests. For the cogency of the argument from Miracles depends on the assumption, that interruptions in the course of nature must ultimately proceed from God; which is not true, if they may be effected by other Beings without his sanction. And it must be conceded, that explicit as Scripture is in considering Miracles as signs of divine agency, it still does seem to give created Spirits some power of working them; and even, in its most literal sense, intimates the possibility of their working them in opposition to the true doctrine.[56] With a view of meeting this difficulty, some writers have attempted to make a distinction between *great* and *small*, *many* and *few* Miracles; and have thus inadvertently destroyed the intelligibility of any, as the *criterion* of a divine interposition.[57] Others, by referring to the nature of the *doctrine* attested, for determining the author of the Miracle, have exposed themselves to the plausible charge of adducing, first, the Miracle to attest the divinity of the doctrine, and then, the doctrine to prove the divinity of the Miracle.[58] Others, on the contrary, have thought themselves obliged to *deny* the power of Spirits altogether, and to explain away the Scripture accounts of Demoniacal possessions, and the narrative of our Lord's Temptation.[59] Without, however, having recourse to any of these dangerous modes of answering the objection, it may be sufficient to reply, that, *since*, agreeably to the antecedent sentiment of reason, God has adopted Miracles as the seal of a divine message, we believe he will never suffer

[56] Deut. xiii. 1—3; Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9—11.

[57] More or less, Sherlock, Clarke, Locke, and others.

[58] Prideaux, Clarke, Chandler, &c., seem hardly to have guarded sufficiently against the charge here noticed. There is an appearance of doing honour to the Christian doctrines in representing them as *intrinsically* credible, which leads many into supporting opinions which, carried to their full extent, (as they were by Middleton,) supersede the need of Miracles altogether. It must be recollected, too, that they who are allowed to *praise* have the privilege of *finding fault*, and may reject, according to their *à priori* notions, as well as receive. Doubtless the divinity of a clearly immoral doctrine could not be evidenced by Miracles; for our belief in the Moral attributes of God is much stronger than our conviction of the negative proposition, that *none but* He can interfere with the system of nature. But there is always the danger of extending this admission beyond its proper limits, of supposing ourselves adequate judges of the *tendency* of doctrines, and, because unassisted Reason informs us what is Moral and immoral *in our own case*, of attempting to decide on the *abstract* Morality of actions: *e.g.* many have rejected the Miraculous narrative of the Pentateuch, from an unfounded and unwarrantable opinion, that the means employed in settling the Jews in Canaan were in themselves *immoral*. These remarks are in nowise inconsistent with using (as was done in a former section) our *actual knowledge* of God's attributes, obtained from a survey of nature and human affairs, in determining the probability of certain professed Miracles having proceeded from Him. It is one thing to *infer* from the *experience* of life, another to *imagine* the character of God from the *gratuitous conceptions* of our own minds. From *experience* we gain but general and imperfect ideas of wisdom, goodness, &c. enough (that is) to bear witness to a Revelation when given, not enough to supersede it. On the contrary, our *speculations* concerning the divine attributes and designs, professing as they do to decide on the truth of Revealed doctrines, in fact go to supersede the necessity of a Revelation altogether.

[59] Especially Farmer.

them to be so counterfeited as to deceive the humble inquirer. Thus the information given by Scripture in nowise undoes the original conclusions of Reason; for it anticipates the objection which itself furnishes, and by revealing the express *intention* of God in Miraculous displays, guarantees to us that he will allow no interference of created power to embarrass the proof thence resulting, of his special interposition.[60] It is unnecessary to say more on this subject; and questions concerning the existence, nature, and limits of Spiritual agency will find their place when Christians are engaged in settling among themselves the doctrines of Scripture. We take it, therefore, for granted, as an obvious and almost undeniable principle, that real Miracles, *i.e.* interruptions in the course of nature, cannot reasonably be referred to any power but divine: because it is natural to refer an alteration in the system to its original author, and because Reason does not inform us of any other Being but God exterior to nature; and lastly, because in the particular case of the Scripture Miracles, the workers of them confirm our previous judgment by expressly attributing them to Him.

Nor to unknown laws of nature.

2. A more subtle question remains, respecting the possible existence of causes in nature, to us unknown, by the supposed operation of which the apparent anomalies may be reconciled to the ordinary laws of the system. It has already been admitted, that some difficulty will at times attend the discrimination of Miraculous from merely uncommon events; and it must be borne in mind, that in this, as in all questions from which demonstration is excluded, it is impossible, from the nature of the case, absolutely to *disprove* any, even the wildest, hypothesis which may be framed. It may freely be granted, moreover, that some of the Scripture Miracles, if they stood alone, might reasonably be referred to natural principles of which we were ignorant, or resolved into some happy combination of accidental circumstances. For our purpose, it is quite sufficient if there be a *considerable number* which no sober judgment would attempt to deprive of their supernatural character, by any supposition of our ignorance of natural laws, or of exaggeration in the narrative. Raising the dead and giving sight to the blind by a word, feeding a multitude with the casual provisions which an individual among them had with him, healing persons at a distance, and walking on the water, are facts, even separately taken, far beyond the conceivable effects of artifice or accident; and much more so, when they meet together in one and the same history. And here Hume's argument from general experience is in point, which at least proves that the *ordinary* powers of nature are unequal to the production of works of this kind. It becomes, then, a balance of opposite probabilities, whether gratuitously to suppose a *multitude* of perfectly *unknown* causes, and these, moreover, *meeting* in one and the same

[60] Fleetwood, On Miracles, Disc. 2, p. 201. Van Mildert's Boyle Lectures, Serm. 21.

history, or to have recourse to *one*, and that a *known* power, then Miraculously exerted for an extraordinary and worthy object. We may safely say no sound reasoner will hesitate on which alternative to decide. While, then, a fair proportion of the Scripture Miracles are indisputably deserving of their name, but a weak objection can be derived from the case of the few which, owing to accidental circumstances, bear, at the present day, less decisive marks of supernatural agency. For, be it remembered, (and it is a strong confirmatory proof that the Jewish and Christian Miracles are really what they profess to be,) that though the Miraculous character of *some* of them is more doubtful in one Age than in another, yet the progress of Science has made no approximation to a *general* explication of them on natural principles. While discoveries in Optics and Chemistry have accounted for a host of apparent Miracles, they hardly touch upon those of the Jewish and Christian systems. Here is no phantasmagoria to be detected, no analysis or synthesis of substances, ignitions, explosions, and other customary resources of the juggler's art.[61]—But, as before, we shall best be able to estimate their character in this respect, by contrasting them with other occurrences which have sometimes been considered Miraculous. Thus, too, a second line of difference will be drawn between them and the mass of rival prodigies, whether Religious or otherwise, to which they are often compared.

Tests beween real and apparent Miracles deduced from the definition of the term.

A Miracle, then, as far as it is an evidence of divine interposition, being an ascertained anomaly in an established system, or an event without assignable physical cause, those facts of course have no title to the name—

1. WHICH MAY BE REFERRED TO MISSTATEMENT IN THE NARRATION.

Natural events mis-stated.

Such are many of the prodigies of the Heathen Mythology and History, which have been satisfactorily traced to an *exaggeration of natural events: e.g.* the fables of the Cyclops, Centaurs, of the annual transformation of a Scythian nation into wolves, as related by Herodotus, &c. Or *natural facts allegorized*, as in the fable of Scylla and Charybdis.—Or where the fact may be explained by *supplying a probable omission;* as we should account for a story of a man sailing in the air, by supposing a balloon described.[62]—Or where the Miracle is but *verbal*, as the poetical prodigy of thunder without clouds; which is little better than a play upon words, for, supposing it to occur, it would not be called thunder.—Or as when Herodotus speaks of wool growing on trees; for, even were it in substance the same as wool, it could not be called so without a contradiction in terms.—Or where the Miracle is one simply of *degree*, for then exaggeration is more easily conceivable;—thus many supposed visions may have been but natural dreams.—Or

[61] See Farmer, Ch. I. Sec. 3.
[62] Bentham, Preuves Judiciaires, Liv. VIII. Ch. X.

where it depends on the combination of a multitude of distinct circumstances, each of which is necessary for the proof of its supernatural character, and where, as in fine experiments, a small mistake is of vast consequence. As those which depend on a *coincidence of time*, which it is difficult for any persons to have ascertained; *e.g.* the exclamation which Apollonius is said to have uttered concerning the assassination of Domitianus at the time of its taking place; and again, the alleged fact of his appearing at Puteoli on the same morning in which he was tried at Rome. Such, too, in some degree is the professed revelation made to St. Basil, who is said to have been Miraculously informed of the death of the Emperor Julian at the *very moment* that it took place.[63] Here we may instance many stories of apparitions; as the popular one concerning the appearance of an individual to the club he used to frequent *at the moment after his death*, who was afterwards discovered to have escaped from his nurses in a fit of delirium *shortly before* it took place, and actually to have joined his friends. We may add the case related to M. Bonnet, of a woman who pretended to know what was passing at a given time at any part of the globe; and who was detected by the simple expedient of accurately marking the time, and comparing her account with the fact.[64] In the same class must be reckoned not a few of the answers of the Heathen Oracles, if it be worth while to allude to them; as that which informed Crœsus of his occupation at a certain time agreed upon. In the Gospel, the nobleman's son begins to amend at the very time that Christ speaks the word; but this circumstance does not constitute, it merely increases the Miracle.—The argument from Prophecy is in this point of view somewhat deficient in simplicity and clearness; as implying the decision of many previous questions, *e.g.* as to the existence of the professed prediction before the event, the interval between the Prophecy and its accomplishment, the completeness of its accomplishment, &c. Hence Prophecy affords a more learned and less popular proof of divine interposition than Physical Miracles, and, except in cases where it contributes a very strong evidence, is commonly of inferior cogency.

2. THOSE WHICH FROM SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THEM MAY NOT UNFAIRLY BE REFERRED TO AN UNKNOWN PHYSICAL CAUSE.

Events referable to an unknown cause.

As those which take place in departments of nature little understood, *e.g.* Miracles of Electricity. — Again, an assemblage of Miracles confined to *one* line of extraordinary exertion in some measure suggests the idea of a cause short of divine. For while their number evinces a wish to display, their similarity argues a defect in, power. This remark is prejudicial to the Miracles of the primitive Church, which consisted almost entirely of exorcisms and

[63] Middleton, Free Inquiry.
[64] Bentham, Preuves Judiciaires, Liv. VIII. Ch. X.

cures; to the Pythagorean, which were principally Miracles of sagacity; and again, to the wonders of the tomb of the Abbé Paris, which were limited to cures, and cures too of particular diseases. While the Miracles of Scripture are frugally dispensed as regards *their object and seasons*, they are endlessly varied in their *nature;* like the work of one who is not wasteful of his riches, yet can be munificent when occasion calls for it.

Here we may notice *tentative* Miracles, as Paley terms them, *i.e.* where out of many trials only some succeed; for inequality of success seems to imply *accident*, in other words, the combination of *unknown Physical causes.* Such are the cures of scrofula by the King's touch, and those effected in the Heathen Temples;[65] and again, those of the tomb of the Abbé Paris, there being but eight or nine well authenticated cures out of the multitude of trials that were made.[66] One of the peculiarities of the cures ascribed to Christ is his invariable success.[67]

Here, for a second reason, *diffidence in the agent* casts suspicion on the reality of professed Miracles; for at least we have the sanction of his own opinion for supposing them to be the effect of accident or unknown causes.

Temporary Miracles also, as many of the Jansenists and other extraordinary cures,[68] may be similarly accounted for; for if ordinary causes can *undo*, it is not improbable they may be able originally to *effect.* The restoration of Lazarus and the rest were restorations to *their former condition*, which was mortal; their subsequent dissolution, then, in the course of nature, does not interfere with the completeness of the previous Miracle.

The Jansenist cures are also unsatisfactory, as being *gradual*, and, for the same reason, the professed liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood; a *progressive* effect being a characteristic, as it seems, of the operations of nature. Hence, those Miracles are most perspicuous which are wrought *at the word of command;* as those of Christ and his Apostles. For this as well as other reasons, *incomplete* Miracles, as imperfect cures, are no evidence of supernatural agency; and here, again, we have to instance the cures effected at the tomb of the Abbé Paris.

Again, the *use of means* is suspicious; for a Miracle may almost be defined to be an event *without means.* Hence, however miraculous the production of ice might appear to the Siamese considered *abstractedly*, they would hardly so account it in an actual *experiment*, when they saw the preparation of nitre, &c., which in that climate must have been used for the purpose. In the case of the Steam-vessel or the Balloon, which, it has been sometimes said, would

[65] Stillingfleet, Orig. Sacr. Book II. Ch. X. Sec. 9.

[66] Douglas, Criterion, p. 133.

[67] Ibid. p. 260, cites the following texts: Matt. iv. 23, 24; viii. 16; ix. 35; xii. 15; xiv. 12; Luke iv. 40; vi. 19.

[68] Douglas, Criterion, p. 190. Middelton, Free Inquiry, IV. Sec. 3.

appear Miraculous to persons unacquainted with Science, the Chemical and Mechanical apparatus employed could not fail to rouse suspicion in intelligent minds.—Hence professed Miracles are open to suspicion, if *confined to one spot;* as were the Jansenist cures. For they then become connected with *a necessary condition*, which is all we understand by a *means: e.g.* such may often be imputed to a *confederacy*, which (as is evident) can from its nature seldom shift the scene of action. "The Cock-lane ghost could only knock and scratch in one place;"[69] the Apostles, on the contrary, are represented as dispersed about, and working Miracles in various parts of the world.[70] These remarks are of course inapplicable in a case where the apparent means are known to be inadequate, and are not constantly used; as our Lord's *occasional* application of clay to the eyes, which, while it proves that he did not need its instrumentality, convey also an intimation, that all the efficacy of means is derived from his appointment.

3. THOSE WHICH MAY BE REFERRED TO THE SUPPOSED OPERATION OF A CAUSE KNOWN TO EXIST.

Events referable to the supposed operation of a known cause.

Professed Miracles of *knowledge* or *mental ability* are often unsatisfactory for this reason; being in many cases referable to the ordinary powers of the intellect. Of this kind is the boasted elegance of the style of the Koran, alleged by Mohammed in evidence of his divine mission. Hence most of the Miracles of Apollonius, consisting, as they do, in knowing the thoughts of others, and predicting the common events of life, are no criterion of a supernatural gift; it being only under certain circumstances that such power can clearly be discriminated from the natural exercise of acuteness and sagacity. Accordingly, though a knowledge of the hearts of men is claimed by Christ, it seems to be claimed rather with a view to prove to *Christians* the *doctrine* of his divine nature, than to *attest* to the *world* his authority as a messenger from God. Again, St. Paul's prediction of shipwreck on his voyage to Rome was intended to *prevent* it; and so was the prediction of Agabus concerning the same Apostle's approaching perils at Jerusalem.[71] For a second reason, then, the argument from Prophecy is a less *simple* and *striking* proof of divine agency than a display of Miracles; it being impossible *in all cases* to show that the things foretold were certainly beyond the ordinary faculties of the mind to have discovered. Yet *when this is shown*, Prophecy is one of the most powerful of conceivable evidences; strict foreknowledge being a faculty not only above the powers but even above the comprehension of the human mind.

And much more fairly may apparent Miracles be attributed to the supposed operation of an existing Physical cause, when they

[69] Hey's Lectures, Book I. Ch. XVI. Sec. 10.
[70] Douglas, Criterion, p. 337. [71] Acts xxi. 10—14; xxvii. 10, 21.

are *parallel to its known effects;* as Chemical, Meteorological, &c., phenomena. For though the cause may not perhaps appear in the particular case, yet it is known to have acted in others similar to it. For this reason, no stress can be laid on accounts of luminous crosses in the air, human shadows in the clouds, appearances of men and horses on hills, and spectres when they are speechless, as is commonly the case, ordinary causes being assignable in all of these; or, again, on the pretended liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, or on the exorcism of demoniacs, which is the most frequent Miracle in the primitive Church.—The remark applies moreover to cases of healing, *so far* as they are not instantaneous, complete, &c.; conditions which exclude the supposition of natural means being employed, and which are strictly fulfilled in the Gospel narrative.—Again, some cures are known as possible effects of an *excited imagination;* particularly when the disease arises from obstruction and other disorders of the blood and spirits, as the cures which took place at the tomb of the Abbé Paris.[72] We should be required to add those cases of healing in Scripture, where the *faith* of the petitioners was a necessary condition of the cure, were not these comparatively few, and some of them such as no imagination could have effected, (*e.g.* the restoration of sight,) and some wrought on persons *absent;* and were not faith often required, *not* of the patient, but of the relative or friend who brought him to be healed.[73] The force of imagination may also be alleged to account for the supposed visions and voices which some enthusiasts have believed they saw and heard: *e.g.* the trances of Montanus and his followers, the visions related by some of the Fathers, and those of the Romish Saints; lastly, Mahomet's pretended night-journey to Heaven: all which, granting the sincerity of the reporters, may not unreasonably be referred to the effects of disease or of an excited imagination. Such, it is obvious, *might* be some of the Scripture Miracles, *e.g.* the various appearances of Angels to individuals, the vision of St. Paul when he was transported to the third Heaven, &c., which accordingly were wrought, as Scripture professes, for purposes distinct from that of *evidencing* the doctrine, *viz.* in order to become the medium of a Revelation, or to confirm faith, &c. In other cases, however, the supposition of imagination is excluded by the vision having been witnessed by more than one person, as the Transfiguration; or by its correspondence with distinct visions seen by others, as in the circumstances which attended the conversion of Cornelius; or by its connexion with a permanent Miracle, as the appearance of Christ

[72] Douglas, Criterion, p. 172.

[73] Mark, x. 51, 52. Matt. viii. 5—13. See Douglas, Criterion, p. 258. "Where persons petitioned themselves for a cure, a declaration of their faith was often required, that none might be encouraged to try experiments out of curiosity, in a manner which would have been very indecent, and have tended to many bad consequences." Doddridge on Acts ix. 34.

to St. Paul on his conversion, with the blindness in consequence, which remained three days.[74]

Much more inconclusive are those which are actually *attended by a Physical cause known or suspected to be adequate to their production.* Some of those who were cured at the tomb of the Abbé Paris were at the time making use of the usual remedies; the person whose inflamed eye was relieved was, during his attendance at the sepulchre, under the care of an eminent oculist; another was cured of a lameness in the knee by the mere effort to kneel at the tomb.[75] Arnobius challenges the Heathens to produce one of the pretended Miracles of their Gods performed without the application of some prescription.[76] Again, Hilarion's cures of wounds, as mentioned by Jerome, were accompanied by the application of consecrated oil.[77] The Apostles indeed made use of oil in some of their cures, but they more frequently healed without a medium of any kind.[78] A similar objection might be urged against the narrative of Hezekiah's recovery from sickness, both on account of the application of the figs and the slowness of the cure, were it anywhere stated to have been Miraculous.[79] Again, the dividing of the Red Sea, accompanied as it was by a strong east wind, would not have been clearly Miraculous, had it not been effected at the word of Moses. Much suspicion, too, is (as some think) cast upon the *miraculous* nature of the fire, &c., which put a stop to Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem, by the possibility of referring it to the operation of Chemical principles.—Lastly, answers to prayer, however *providential* are not *Miraculous;* for in granting them, God acts *by means of*, not *out of*, his usual system, making the ordinary course of things *subservient* to a gracious purpose. Such events, then, instead of *evidencing* the divine approbation to a certain cause, must be *proved* from the goodness of the cause to be what they are interpreted to be. Yet by supposed answers to prayer, appeals to Heaven, pretended judgments, &c., enthusiasts in most ages have wished to sanction their claims to divine inspiration. By similar means the pretensions of the Romish hierarchy have been supported.

Observations on the foregoing tests.

Here we close our remarks on the *criterion* of a Miracle; which, it has been seen, is no one definite peculiarity, applicable to all cases, but the combined force of a number of varying circumstances determining our judgment in each particular instance. It might even be said, that a determinate criterion is almost inconceivable. For when once settled, it might appear, as was above remarked, to be merely the Physical antecedent of the extraordinary fact; while on the other hand, from the direction thus given to the ingenuity of impostors, it would soon itself need a criterion to distinguish it from

[74] Paley's Evidences, Part I. Prop. 2.
[75] Douglas, Criterion, p. 143, 184, Note.
[76] Stillingfleet, Book II. Ch. X. Sec. 9.
[77] Middleton, Free Inquiry, IV. Sec. 2.
[78] Mark vi. 13.
[79] 2 Kings xx. 4—7.

its imitations. Certain it is, that the great *variety* of circumstances under which the Christian Miracles were wrought, furnishes an evidence for their divine origin, in addition to that derived from their publicity, clearness, number, instantaneous production, and completeness. The exorcism of demoniacs, however, has already been noticed as being, perhaps, in every case deficient in the proof of its Miraculous nature. Accordingly, this class of Miracles seems not to have been intended as a *primary* evidence of a divine mission, but to be addressed to those who *already* admitted the existence of Evil Spirits, in proof of the power of Christ and his followers over them.[80] To us, then, it is rather a *doctrine* than an *evidence*, manifesting our Lord's *power*, as other doctrines instance his *mercy*.—With regard to the argument from Prophecy, which some have been disposed to abandon on account of the number of conditions necessary for the proof of its supernatural character, it should be remembered, that inability to fix the exact boundary of natural sagacity is no objection to such Prophecies as are undeniably beyond it; and that the mere inconclusiveness of some in Scripture, as proofs of divine prescience, has no positive force against others contained in it, which furnish a full, lasting, and in many cases, growing evidence of its divinity.[81]

IV.

ON THE DIRECT EVIDENCE FOR THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES.

Important as are the inquiries which we have hitherto prosecuted, it is obvious that they do not lead to any positive conclusion, whether certain Miraculous accounts are true or not. However necessary a direct anomaly in the course of nature may be to rouse *attention*, and an important final cause to excite *interest* and *reverence*, still the quality of the testimony on which the accounts rest can alone determine our *belief* in them. The preliminary points, however, have been principally dwelt upon, because objections founded on

[80] See Div. Leg. Book IX. Ch. V. Hence the exercise of this gift seems almost to have been confined to Palestine. At Philippi St. Paul casts out a spirit of divination *in self-defence*. Acts xvi. 16—18. In the transaction related Acts xix. 11—17, Jews are principally concerned.

[81] Some unbelievers have urged the irrelevancy of St. Matthew's citations from the Old Testament Prophecies in illustration of the events of Christ's life, *e.g.* Ch. ii. 15. It must be recollected, however, that what is evidence in one age is often not so in another. That certain of the texts adduced by the Evangelist furnish *at the present day* no proof of divine prescience, is very true; but, unless some kind of argument could have been drawn from them *at the time* the Gospel was written, from traditional interpretations of their sense, we can scarcely account for St Matthew's introducing them. The question is, has there been a *loss* of what was evidence formerly, (as is often the case,) or did St. Matthew bring forward as a Prophetical evidence what was manifestly *not* so, as if to hurt the effect of those other passages, as Ch. xxvii. 35, which have every appearance of being real predictions?—It has been observed, that Prophecy in general *must* be obscure, in order that the events spoken of may not be understood before their accomplishment.

them form the strong ground of unbelievers, who seem in some degree to allow the strength of the direct evidence for the Scripture Miracles. Again, an examination of the direct evidence is less necessary here, because, though antecedent questions have not been neglected by Christian writers,[82] yet the evidence itself, as might be expected, has chiefly engaged their attention.[83] Without entering, then, into a minute consideration of the facts and arguments on which the credibility of the Sacred History rests, we proceed to contrast the *evidence* generally with that produced for other Miraculous narratives; and thus to complete a comparison which has been already instituted, as regards the *antecedent probability* and the *criterion* of Miracles.

The Scripture Miracles have far stronger evidence in their favour than other Professed Miracles, though they do not require evidence equally strong.

For the present, then, we forego the advantage which the Scripture Miracles have gained in the preceding sections over all professed facts of a similar nature. In reality, indeed, the very same evidence which would suffice to prove the former, might be inadequate when offered in behalf of those of the Eclectic School or the Romish Church. For the Miracles of Scripture, and no other, are unexceptionable and worthy of a divine agent; and Bishop Butler has clearly shown, that, in a practical question, as the divinity of a professed Revelation must be considered, even the weakest reasons are decisive when not counteracted by any opposite arguments.[84] Whatever evidence, then, is offered for them is *entirely* available to the proof of their actual occurrence; whereas evidence for the truth of other similar accounts, supposing it to exist, would be *first* employed in overcoming the objections which attach to them all from their very character, circumstances, or object. If, however, we show that the Miracles of Scripture as far surpass all others in their *direct evidence*, as they excel them in their *à priori probability*, a much stronger case will be made out in their favour, and an additional line of distinction drawn between them and others.

What kind of testimony is to be required for a Miracle.

The credibility of Testimony arises from the belief we entertain of the character and competency of the witnesses; and this is true, not only in the case of Miracles, but when facts of any kind are examined into. It is obvious, that we should be induced to distrust the most natural and plausible statement when made by an individual whom we suspected of a wish to deceive, or of relating facts which he had no sufficient means of knowing. Or if we credited his narrative, we should do so, not from dependence on the reporter, but from its intrinsic likelihood, or from circumstantial evidence.

[82] Especially by Vince, in his valuable Treatise On the Christian Miracles; and Hey, in his Lectures.

[83] As Paley, Lyttleton, Leslie, &c.

[84] The only fair objection that can be made to this statement is, that it is antecedently *improbable* that the Almighty should work Miracles with a view to *general conviction*, without furnishing *strong evidence* that they really occurred. This was noticed above, when the antecedent probability of Miracles was discussed. That it is *unsatisfactory* to decide on scanty evidence is no objection, as in other most important practical questions we are constantly obliged to make up our minds and determine our course of action on insufficient evidence.

In the case of *ordinary* facts, therefore, we think it needless, as indeed it would be endless, to inquire rigidly into the credibility of the Testimony by which they are conveyed to us, because they in a manner speak for themselves. When, however, the information is *unexpected*, or *extraordinary*, or *improbable*, our only means of determining its truth is by considering the credit due to the witnesses; and then, of course, we exercise that right of scrutiny which we before indeed possessed, but did not think it worth while to claim. A Miracle, then, calls for no *distinct species* of Testimony from that offered for other events, but for a Testimony strong in proportion to the improbability of the particular fact attested; and it is as impossible to draw any line, or to determine *how much* is required, as to define the quantity and quality of evidence necessary to prove the occurrence of an earthquake, or the appearance of any meteoric phenomenon. Every thing depends on those attendant circumstances, of which we have already spoken, the object of the Miracle, the occasion, manner, and human agent employed. If, *e.g.* a Miracle were said to be wrought for an immoral object, then of course the fact would rest on the credibility of the Testimony alone, and would challenge the most rigid examination. Again, if the object be highly interesting to us, as that professed by the Scripture Miracles, we shall naturally be careful in our inquiry, from an anxious fear of being deceived. But in any case the Testimony cannot turn out to be *more* than that of competent and honest men; and an inquiry must not be prosecuted under the idea of finding something beyond this, but to obtain proofs of this. And since the existence of competency and honesty may be established in various ways, it follows that the credibility of a given story may be proved by distinct considerations, each of which, separately taken, might be sufficient for the purpose. It is obvious, moreover, as indeed is implied by the very nature of Moral evidence, that the proof of its credibility may be weaker or stronger, and yet in both cases be a *proof;* and, hence, that no limit can be put to the conceivable accumulation of evidence in its behalf. Provided, then, the existing evidence be sufficient to produce a rational conviction, it is nothing to the purpose to urge, as has sometimes been alleged against the Scripture Miracles, that the extraordinary facts might have been proved by different or more overpowering evidence. It has been said, for instance, that no Testimony can fairly be trusted which has not passed the ordeal of a legal examination. Yet, calculated as that mode of examination undoubtedly is to elicit truth, surely Truth may be elicited by *other* ways also. Independent and circumstantial writers may confirm a fact as satisfactorily as witnesses in Court. They may be questioned and cross-questioned, and, moreover, brought up for re-examination in any succeeding Age; whereas, however great may be the talents and experience of the individuals who conducted the legal investigation, yet when they

have once closed it and given in their verdict, we believe upon *their credit*, and we have no means of examining for ourselves. To say, however, that this kind of evidence might have been *added* to the other, in the case of the Christian Miracles,[85] is merely to assert that the proof of the credibility of Scripture might have been *stronger than it is;* which we have already allowed it might have been, without assignable limit.

The credibility, then, of a Testimony depending on the evidence of *honesty* and *competency* in those who give it, it is prejudicial to their character for *honesty*,—

Tests relative to the honesty of witnesses. Gain, &c.

1. If desire of *gain*, *power*, or other *temporal advantage* may be imputed to them. This would detract materially from the authority of Philostratus, even supposing him to have been in a *situation* for ascertaining the truth of his own narrative; as he professes to write his account of Apollonius at the instance of his patroness, the Empress Julia, who is known to have favoured the Eclectic cause. Again, the account of the Miracle performed on the door-keeper at the cathedral at Saragossa, on which Hume insists, rests principally upon the credit of the Canons, whose interest was concerned in its establishment. This remark, indeed, obviously applies to the Romish Miracles generally. The Christian Miracles, on the contrary, were attested by the Apostles, not only without the prospect of assignable worldly advantage, but with the certainty and after the experience of actual suffering.

Party spirit.

2. When there is room for suspecting *party spirit* or *rivalry;* as in the Miraculous biographies of the Eclectic philosophers; in those of Loyola and other Saints of the rival orders in the Romish Church; and in the present Mohammedan accounts of the Miracles of Mohammed, which, not to mention other objections to them, are composed with an evident design of rivalling those of Christ.[86]

Shame.

3. Again, a tale once told may be persisted in from *shame of retracting*, after the motives which first gave rise to it have ceased to act, even at the risk of suffering. This remark cannot apply to the case of the Apostles, until some reason is assigned for their getting up their Miraculous story in the first instance. If necessary, however, it could be brought with force against any argument drawn from the perseverance of the witnesses for the cures professedly wrought by Vespasianus, "*postquam nullum mendacio pretium;*" for, as they did not suffer for persisting in their story, had they retracted they would have gratuitously confessed their own want of principle.

Character for falsehood.

4. *A previous character for falsehood* is almost fatal to the credibility of a witness of an extraordinary narrative, *e.g.* the notorious

[85] Some of our Saviour's Miracles, however, *were* subjected to judicial examination. See John v. and ix. In v. 16 the measures of the Pharisees are described by the technical word ἰδίωκον.

[86] See Professor Lee's Persian Tracts, p. 446, 447.

insincerity and frauds of the Church of Rome in other things, are in themselves enough to throw a strong suspicion on its Testimony to its own Miracles. The primitive Church is in some degree open to a charge of a similar nature.[87] Or *an intimacy with suspicious characters, e.g.* Prince Hohenlohe's connexion with the Romish Church, and that of Philostratus with the Eclectics, since both the Eclectic and Romish Schools have countenanced the practice of what are called pious frauds.

Marks of unfairness.

5. *Inconsistencies* or *prevarications* in the Testimony, *marks of unfairness, exaggeration, suppression of particulars, &c.* Of all these we convicted Philostratus, whose memoir forms a remarkable contrast to the artless and candid narratives of the Evangelists. The Books of the New Testament, containing as they do separate accounts of the same transactions, admit of a minute cross-examination, which terminates so decidedly in favour of their fidelity, as to recommend them highly on the score of honesty, even independently of the known sufferings of the writers.

Facilities for dishonesty.

6. Lastly, witnesses may be objected to who have the *opportunity* of being dishonest; as those who write at a distance from the time and place of the professed Miracle, or without mentioning particulars, &c. But on these points we shall speak immediately in a different connexion.

Tests of competency of witnesses,—

Secondly, witnesses must be, not only *honest*, but *competent* also, *i.e.* such as have *ascertained* the facts which they attest, or who report *after examination*. Here then we notice,

from the circumstances of the case:

1. Deficiency of examination implied in the *circumstances of the case*. As when it is first published in an *age or country remote from the professed time and scene of action;* for in that case room is given to suspect failure of memory, imperfect information, &c.; whereas to write in the presence of those who know the circumstances of the transactions, is an appeal which increases the force of the Testimony by associating them in it. Accounts, however, whether Miraculous or otherwise, possess very little *intrinsic* authority, when written so far from the time or place of the transactions recorded, as the Biographies of Pythagoras, Apollonius, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Mohammed, Loyola, or Xavier.[88] The opposite circumstances of the Christian Testimony have often been pointed out. Here we may particularly notice the providential dispersion of the Jews over the Roman Empire before the Age of Christ; by which means the Apostle's Testimony was given in Heathen countries, as well as in Palestine, in the face of those who had both the will and the power to contradict it if incorrect.

While the Testimony of contemporaries is necessary to guarantee the truth of ordinary History, Miracles require the Testimony of *eye-witnesses*. For ordinary events are believed in part *from their*

[87] Hey, Lectures, Book I. Ch. XII. Sec. 15.
[88] Paley, Evidences, Part I. Prop. 2.

being natural, but *Testimony* being the main support of a Miraculous narrative must in that case be the best of its kind. Again, we may require the Testimony to be *circumstantial* in reference to dates, places, persons, &c.; for the absence of these seems to imply an imperfect knowledge, and at least gives less opportunity of inquiry to those who wish to ascertain its fidelity.[89]

Miracles which are *not lasting* do not admit of adequate examination; as visions, extraordinary voices, &c. The cure of diseases, on the other hand, is a *permanent* evidence of a divine interposition; particularly such cures of bodily imperfections as are undeniably Miraculous in their nature, as well as permanent; to these, then, our Lord especially appeals in evidence of his divine mission.[90] Lastly, statements are unsatisfactory in which the Miracle is described as wrought before a very *few;* for room is allowed for suspecting mistake, or an understanding between the witnesses. Or, on the other hand, those wrought *in a confused crowd;* such are many standing Miracles of the Romanists, which are exhibited with the accompaniment of imposing pageants, or on a stage, or at a distance, or in the midst of candles and incense. Our Saviour, on the contrary, bids the lepers he had cleansed *show* themselves to the Priests, and make the customary offering as a *memorial* of their cures.[91] And when he appeared to the Apostles after his Resurrection, he allowed them to *examine* his hands and feet.[92] Those of the Scripture Miracles which were wrought before few, or in a crowd, were *permanent;* as cures,[93] and the raising of Jairus's daughter; or were of so *vast a nature*, that a crowd could not prevent the witnesses from ascertaining the fact, as the standing still of the Sun at the word of Joshua.

2. Deficiency of examination implied in the *character, &c., of the witnesses: e.g.* if there be any suspicion of their *derangement*, or if there be an evident *defect in bodily or mental faculties* which are necessary for examining the Miracle, as when the intellect or senses are impaired. *Number* in the witnesses refutes charges of this nature; for it is not conceivable that many should be deranged or mistaken at once, and in the same way.

From the character of the witnesses.

Derangement.

Enthusiasm, ignorance, or *habitual credulity*, are defects which no number of witnesses removes. The Jansenist Miracles took place in the most ignorant and superstitious district of Paris.[94] Alexander Pseudomantis practised his arts among the Paphlagonians, a barbarous people. Popish Miracles and the juggles of the Heathen Priests have been most successful in times of ignorance.

Enthusiasm, or credulity.

Yet while we reasonably object to gross ignorance or besotted credulity in witnesses for a Miraculous story, we must guard against

[89] The vagueness of the accounts of Miraculous interpositions related by the Fathers is pointed out by Middleton. (Free Inquiry, II. p. 22.)

[90] Matt. xi. 5.

[91] Luke v. 14; xvii. 14.

[92] Luke xxiv. 39, 40.

[93] Mark viii. 22—26.

[94] The Fauxbourg St. Marcel. Less.

Whether the Testimony of educated men is necessary.

the opposite extreme of requiring the Testimony of men of Science and general knowledge. Men of Philosophical minds are often too fond of inquiring into the causes and mutual dependence of events, of arranging, theorizing, and refining, to be accurate and straightforward in their account of extraordinary occurrences. Instead of giving a plain statement of facts, they are insensibly led to *correct* the evidence of their senses with a view to account for the phenomenon; as Chinese painters, who, instead of drawing in perspective, give lights and shadows their supposed meaning, and depict the prospect as they think it *should be*, not as *it is*.[95] As Miracles differ from other events only when considered *relatively* to a general system, it is obvious that the same persons are competent to attest Miraculous facts who are suitable witnesses of corresponding natural ones. If a peasant's Testimony be admitted to the phenomenon of meteoric stones, he may evidence the fact of an unusual and unaccountable darkness. A Physician's certificate is not needed to assure us of the illness of a friend; nor is it necessary to attest the simple fact that he has instantaneously recovered. It is important to bear this in mind, for some writers argue as if there were something intrinsically defective in the Testimony given by ignorant persons to Miraculous occurrences.[96] To say, that unlearned persons are not judges of the fact of a Miraculous event, is only so far true as all Testimony is fallible and liable to be distorted by prejudice. Every one, not only superstitious persons, is apt to interpret facts his own way. If the superstitious see too many prodigies, men of Science may see too few. The facility with which the Japanese ascribed the ascent of a balloon, which they witnessed at St. Petersburgh, to the powers of Magic, (a circumstance which has been sometimes urged against the admission of unlearned Testimony,[97]) is only the conduct of theorists accounting for a novel phenomenon on the principles of their own system.

It may be said, that ignorance prevents a witness from *discriminating* between natural and supernatural events, and thus weakens the authority of his *judgment* concerning the Miraculous nature of a fact. It is true; but if the fact be recorded, *we* may judge for *ourselves* on that point. Yet it may be safely said, that not even before persons in the lowest state of ignorance could any great variety of professed Miracles be displayed without their distinguishing rightly *on the whole* between the effects of nature and those of a power exterior to it; though in particular instances they doubtless might be mistaken. Much more would this be the case with the lower ranks of a *civilized* people. Practical intelligence is insensibly diffused from class to class; if the upper ranks are educated,

[95] It is well known, that those persons are accounted the best transcribers of MSS. who are ignorant of the language transcribed; the habit of *correcting* being almost involuntary in men of letters.

[96] Hume on Miracles. Part II. Reason I.

[97] Bentham, Preuves Judiciaires, Liv. VIII. Ch. II.

numbers besides them, without any formal and systematic knowledge, almost instinctively discriminate between natural and supernatural events. Here Science has little advantage over common sense; a peasant is quite as certain that a resurrection from the dead is Miraculous as the most able physiologist.[98]

Character of the original witnesses of the Christian Miracles.

The original witnesses of our Saviour's Miracles were very far from a dull or ignorant race. The inhabitants of a maritime and border country, as Galilee was, engaged, moreover, in commerce, composed of natives of various countries, and, therefore, from the nature of the case acquainted with more than one language, have necessarily their intellects sharpened and their minds considerably enlarged, and are of all men least disposed to acquiesce in marvellous tales.[99] Such a people must have *examined* before they suffered themselves to be excited in the degree the Evangelists describe.[100] But even supposing that those among them who were in consequence *convinced* of the divine mission of Christ, were of a more superstitious turn of mind than the rest, still this is not sufficient to account for their conviction. For superstition, while it might facilitate the bare *admission* of Miraculous events, would at the same time weaken their *practical influence.* Miracles ceasing to be accounted *strange*, would cease to be *striking* also. Whereas the conviction wrought in the minds of these men was no bare and indolent *assent* to facts which they might have thought antecedently probable or not improbable, but a *conversion* in principles and mode of life, and a consequent sacrifice of all that nature holds dear, to which none would submit except after the fullest examination of the authority enjoining it. If additional evidence be required, appeal may be made to the multitude of Gentiles in Greece and Asia, in whose principles and mode of living, belief in the Miracles made a change even more striking and complete than was effected in the case of the Jews. In a word, then, the *conversion* which Christ and his Apostles *effected* invalidates the charge of blind *credulity* in the witnesses; the *practical* nature of the belief produced proving that it was founded on an *examination* of the Miracles.

Influence of superiors.

Again, it weakens the authority of the witnesses, if their belief can be shown to have been promoted by the *influence of superiors*; for then they virtually cease to be themselves witnesses, and report

[98] It has been observed, that more suitable witnesses could not be selected of the fact of a Miraculous draught of fishes than the fishermen of the lake wherein it took place.

[99] See Less, Opuscul.

[100] If, on the other hand, we would see with how unmoved an unconcern men receive accounts of Miracles, when they believe them to be events of every-day occurrence, we may turn to the conduct of the African Christians in the Age of Austin, whom that Father in vain endeavoured to interest in Miraculous stories of relics, &c., by formal accounts and certificates of the cures wrought by them. See Middleton, p. 138. The *stir*, then, which the Miracles of Christ made in Galilee implies, that they were not received with an *indolent* belief. It must be noticed, moreover, in opposition to the statement of some unbelievers, that great numbers of the Jews were *converted*. Acts ii. 41; iv. 4; v. 13, 14; vi. 7; ix. 35; xv. 5; xxi. 20. On this subject, see Jenkin, On the Christian Religion, Vol. II. Ch. XXXII.

the facts on the authority (as it were) of their patrons. It is observable, that the national conversions of the middle Ages generally *began* with the Princes and *descended* to their subjects; those of the Apostolic Age obviously proceeded in the reverse order.[101]

Miracles wrought in support of an established Religion.

It is almost fatal to the validity of the Testimony, if the Miracle attested coincides with a *previous system*, or supports a *cause already embraced* by the witnesses. Men are always ready to believe what flatters their own opinions, and of all prepossessions those of Religion are the strongest. There is so much in the *principle* of all Religion that is true and good, so much conformable to the best feelings of our nature, which perceives itself to be weak and guilty, and looks out for an unseen and superior being for guidance and support; and the particular worship in which each individual is brought up, is so familiarized to him by habit, so endeared to his affections by the associations of place and the recollections of past years, so connected too with the ordinary transactions and most interesting events of life, that even should that form be irrational and degrading, still it will in most cases preserve a strong influence over his mind, and dispose him to credit upon slight examination any arguments adduced in its defence. Hence an account of Miracles in confirmation of their own Religion will always be favourably received by men whose creed has already led them to expect such interpositions of superior beings. This consideration invalidates at once the testimony commonly offered for Pagan and Popish Miracles, and in no small degree that for the Miracles of the primitive Church. The professed cures of Vespasianus were performed in honour of Serapis in the midst of his worshippers; and the people of Saragossa, who attested the miracle wrought in the case of the door-keeper of the Cathedral, had previous faith in the virtues of holy oil.[102]

No Miracles but those recorded in Scripture have introduced a Religion.

Here the evidence for the Scripture Miracles is unique. In other cases the previous system has supported the Miracles, but here the Miracles introduced and upheld the system. The Christian Miracles in particular[103] were received on their own merits; and the admission of them became the turning point in the creed and life of the witnesses, which thenceforth took a new and altogether different direction. But, moreover, as if their own belief in them were not enough, the Apostles went out of their way to debar any one from the Christian Church who did not believe them as well as them-

[101] Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. Cent. VI. VIII. IX.

[102] It has been noticed as a suspicious circumstance in the testimony to the reported Miracle wrought in the case of the Confessors in the persecution of the Arian Hunneric, that Victor Vitensis, one of the principal witnesses, though writing in Africa when it professedly took place, and where the individuals thus distinguished were then living, *yet* refers only to *one* of them, who was then living at the *Athanasian* Court at *Constantinople*, and held in particular honour by Zeno and the Empress.—"If any one doubt the fact, let him go to *Constantinople*." See the whole evidence in Milner's Church History, Cent. V. Ch. XI.; who, however, strongly defends the Miracle. Gibbon pretends to do the same, with a view to provide a rival to the Gospel Miracles.

[103] Not to mention those of Moses and Elijah.

selves.[104] Not content that men should be converted on any ground, they fearlessly challenged refutation, by excluding from their fellowship of suffering any who did not formally assent as a necessary condition of admittance and first article of faith, to one of the most stupendous of all the Miracles, their Master's Resurrection from the dead;—a procedure this, which at once evinces their own unqualified conviction of the fact, and associates, too, all their converts with them as believers in a Miracle contemporary with themselves. Nor is this all—a Religious creed necessarily *prejudices* the mind *against* admitting the Miracles of hostile Sects, in the very same proportion in which it leads it to *acquiesce* in such as support its own dogmas.[105] The Christian Miracles, then, have the strongest of conceivable attestations, in the conversion of many who at first were prejudiced against them, and in the extorted confession of enemies, who, by the embarrassment which the admission occasioned them, showed at least that they had not made it till after a full and accurate investigation of the extraordinary facts.

Whether the doctrine of a future life, and not the Miracles, induced the first converts to embrace Christianity

It has been sometimes objected, that the minds of the first converts might be wrought upon by the doctrine of a future state which the Apostles preached, and be thus persuaded to admit the Miracles without a rigorous examination.[106] But, as Paley well replies, evidence of the *truth* of the promise would still be necessary; especially as men rather demand than dispense with proof when some great and unexpected good is reported to them. Yet it is more than doubtful, whether the promise of a future life would excite this interest: for the desire of immortality, though a natural, is no permanent or powerful feeling, and furnishes no principle of action. Most men, even in a Christian country, are too well satisfied with this world to look forward to another with any great and settled anxiety. Supposing immortality to be a good, it is one too distant to warm or influence. Much less are they disposed to sacrifice present comfort, and strip themselves of former opinions and habits, for the mere contingency of future happiness. The hope of another life, grateful as it is *under* affliction, will not induce a man to *rush into* affliction for the sake of it. The inconvenience of a severe complaint is not outbalanced by the pleasure of a remedy. On the other hand, though we know gratuitous declarations of coming judgments and divine wrath may, for a time, frighten weak minds, they will neither have effect upon strong ones, nor produce a *permanent* and *consistent* effect upon any. Persons who are thus wrought upon in the *present* day, believe the denunciations *because* they are in Scripture, not Christianity because it contains them. The authority of Revealed Religion is taken for granted both by the preacher and his hearers. On the whole, then, it seems inconceivable, that the promise or threat of a future life should have supplied the place of previous

[104] Campbell on Miracles, Part II. Sec. 1.

[105] Campbell on Miracles, Part I. Sec. 4.

[106] Gibbon particularly, Ch. XV.

belief in Christianity, or have led the witnesses to admit the Miracles on a slight examination.

Love of the marvellous.

Lastly, *love of the marvellous, of novelty, &c.*, may be mentioned as a principle influencing the mind to acquiesce in professed Miracles without full examination. Yet such feelings are more adapted to exaggerate and circulate a story than to invent it. We can trace their influence very clearly in the instances of Apollonius and the Abbé Paris, both of whom had excited attention by their eccentricities *before* they gained reputation for extraordinary power.[107] Such principles, moreover, are not in general practical, and have little power to sustain the mind under continued opposition and suffering.[108]

Observations on the foregoing tests

These are some of the obvious points which will come into consideration in deciding upon the authority of Testimony offered for Miracles; and they enable us at once to discriminate the Christian story from all others which have been set up against it. With a view of simplifying the argument, the evidence for the Jewish Miracles has been left out of the question;[109] because, though strong and satisfactory, it is not at the present day so *directly* conclusive as that on which the Christian rest. Nor is it necessary, we conceive, to bring evidence for more than a fair proportion of the Miracles; supposing, that is, those which remain unproved are shown to be similar to them, and indissolubly connected with the same system. It may be even said, that if the single fact of the Resurrection be established, quite enough will have been proved for believing all the Miracles of Scripture.

View of the complete evidence for the Scripture Miracles.

Of course, however, the argument becomes far stronger when it is shown that there *is* evidence for the great bulk of the Miracles, though not equally strong for some as for others; and that the Jewish, sanctioned as they are by the New Testament, may also be established on distinct and peculiar grounds. Nor let it be forgotten, that the Christian story itself is supported, over and above the evidence that might fairly be required for it, by several bodies of Testimony quite independent of each other.[110] By *separate* pro-

[107] See above, the memoir of Apollonius.—Of the Abbe, Mosheim says, "*Diem vix obierat*, voluntariis cruciatibus et pœnis exhaustus, *mirabilis iste homo, quum immensa hominum multitudo ad ejus corpus confluereet; quorum alii pedes ejus osculabantur, alii partem capillorum abscindebant, quam* sancti loco pignoris *ad mala quævis averruncanda servarent, alii libros et lintea quæ attulerant, cadaveri admovebant* quod virtute quadam divina plenum esse putabant. Et statim *vis illa mirifica, quâ omne, quod in terrâ hâc reliquit, præditum esse fertur, apparebat*," &c. Inquisit. in verit. Miraculor. F. de Paris, Sec. 1.

[108] Paley, Evidences, Part I. Prop. 2.

[109] The truth of the Mosaic narrative is proved from the *genuineness* of the Pentateuch, as written to contemporaries and eye-witnesses of the Miracles; from the *predictions* contained in the Pentateuch; from the *very existence* of the Jewish system, (Sumner's Records;) and from the *declarations of the New Testament writers.* The Miracles of Elijah and Elisha are proved to us by the *authority of the Books* in which they are related, and by *means of the New Testament.*

[110] The fact of the Christian Miracles may be proved, first, by the sufferings and consistent story of the original wit-

cesses of reasoning it may be shown, that if Christianity was established without Miracles, it was, to say the least, an altogether singular and unique event in the history of mankind; and the extreme improbability of so many distinct and striking peculiarities uniting (as it were) by chance in one and the same case, raises the proof of its divine origin to a moral certainty. In short, it is only by being made unnatural that the Christian narrative can be deprived of a supernatural character; and we may safely affirm, that the strongest evidence we possess for the most certain facts of other history, is weak compared to that on which we believe that the first preachers of the Gospel were gifted with Miraculous powers.

Union of testimony with antecedent probability.

And thus a case is established so strong, that even were there an antecedent improbability in the facts attested, in most judgments it would be sufficient to overcome it. On the contrary, we have already shown their intrinsic character to be exactly such as our previous knowledge of the divine attributes and government would lead us to expect in works ascribed to him. Their grandeur, beauty, and consistency; the clear and unequivocal marks they bear of superhuman agency; the importance and desirableness of the object they propose to effect, are in correspondence to the variety and force of the evidence itself.

Conclusion.

Such, then, is the contrast they present to all other professed Miracles, from those of Apollonius downwards—which have all been shown, more or less, to be improbable from the circumstances of the case; inconclusive when considered as marks of divine interference; and quite destitute of good evidence for their having really occurred.

Lastly, it must be observed, that the proof derived from interruptions in the course of nature, though a principal, is yet but *one* out of *many* proofs on which the cause of Revealed Religion rests; and that even supposing (for the sake of argument) it were altogether inconclusive at the present day, still the other evidences,[111] as they are called, would be fully equal to prove to us the divine origin of Christianity.

nesses; secondly, from the actual conversion of large bodies of men in the Age in which they are said to have been wrought; thirdly, from the institution, at the time, of a day commemorative of the Resurrection, which has been observed ever since; fourthly, by collateral considerations, such as the tacit assent given to the Miracles by the adversaries of Christianity, the Eclectic imitations of them, and the pretensions to Miraculous power in the primitive Church. These are *distinct* arguments, no one of them absolutely *presupposes* the genuineness of the Scripture narrative, though the force of the whole is much increased when it is proved.

[111] Such as, the system of doctrine, marks of design, gradual disclosure of unknown truths, &c., connecting together the whole Bible as the work of one mind:—Prophecy:—the character of Christ:—the Morality of the Gospel:—the wisdom of its doctrines, displaying at once knowledge of the human heart and skill in engaging its affections, &c.

BELL AND BAIN, PRINTERS, GLASGOW.